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Breathes the sweet memory from a good man's tomb.**

SIR E. B. LYTTON.

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There is light on the hills, and the valley is past!

Ascend, happy pilgrim! thy labors are o'er!

The sunshine of Heaven around thee is cast!

And thy weak, doubting footsteps can falter no more.

On, pilgrim! that hill richly circled with rays

Is Zion! Lo, there is "the City of Saints!"

And the beauties, the glories, that region displays,

Inspiration's own language imperfectly paints.

MRS. O. P. O. E.

PREFACE.

THE history of God's chosen people is invested with a holy interest. The Hebrews, as a nation, had an origin as wonderful as their mission was sublime. That part of their history more immediately embraced in this volume, is clothed with an extraordinary importance, in view of the fact that it was the formative period of their destiny. It was a time of preparation, of education, and discipline. It was then that God laid the foundations of that empire, whose grandeur will eclipse all earthly kingdoms, and whose glory is now filling the world. The record of their experience within that circle

of time is peculiarly interesting to the Christian, on account of its spiritual significance. The miracles, the wonders, the imposing rituals, and lofty symbols, are eminently worthy of our prayerful consideration.

In the work now submitted, the author has studied to discover and portray those spiritual forces whose potent efficacy moulded the individual and national peculiarities of the chosen people, and to direct attention to the fact that the same spiritual powers are still operative in the economy of grace, though veiled under a different exterior. True piety is in all ages essentially the same, though the forms under which it was made manifest to the world during the Theocracy were different from those under the Gospel dispensation. Having come from heaven, it carries with it the heavenly and the divine; and, like everything which proceeds from God, it has perfection as its crowning excellence. Although the Israelite does not offer, in his experience, the perfection of the ideal, neither may we hope to find the gospel perfectly actualized in the Christian; yet the imperfections which attach to

forms and individuals do not impair the excellence of that religion which has come from God. The fountain is pure, though the stream may be tarnished.

The title of the book indicates the scope and subject matter of discussion. The leading object is, to show that the experience of the pious Israelite repeats itself in the devout Christian; and that the pilgrimage from Egypt to Palestine, in its most notable events and stages, was designed to be symbolic of the soul's exodus from the bondage of sin to the celestial Canaan. A careful examination of the dealings of Providence with the Israelite, in his progress towards the Land of Promise, will reveal much that is fitted to comfort the heart, to instruct the mind, and to cheer the pilgrimage of the Christian to an immortality full of glory.

God grant that the TWO PILGRIMS, now sent forth upon their mission, may impart encouragement to the desponding, animate with hope those that are cast down, fortify the patience of such as are tried, and inspire with a spirit of endurance those

who are now journeying over life's weary way towards the beautiful home of the redeemed. Minute details in the Exodus of the Hebrews are avoided; only those glowing events which, like gems, lie scattered through that record, are gathered and strung, that in their reflected light the pilgrim to heaven may behold his personal experience mirrored. The moral exercises of God's children, though separated by ages, and transpiring under the most diverse circumstances, are yet so marked and glorious in their resemblance, that, while they constitute the chief beauty of the moral field of history, they at the same time afford infallible proof of the same Divine origin, and demonstrate the truth of the Apostle's declaration—"There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all."

Another design, influential in the preparation of this volume, has been, to aid in unveiling still more the inexhaustible treasures of God's word, and to illustrate the glory of Divine grace, as it is unfolded in the planting of the Church of the Redeemer.

By whatever appropriate means we may be able to lead immortal minds with fresh zeal to the study of the Scriptures, we may become instrumental in promoting the Divine glory, and conducting men to happiness, because we bring them to this fountain of living waters. While the Scriptures unfold to us the wealth of Divine love, that portion over which our meditations more especially range in the present volume, exhibits to us the germ of that tree which fills the world, and under whose shadow all nations shall yet dwell. While we walk about Zion now, to admire her strength, her beauty, her resources, her mission, and her glory, we may with great profit contrast the early conflicts of the Church with her present conquests. The Church has not been fashioned as the statue of the artist; she was 'begotten—not made, but born; she enlarges her proportions—not as a building, by adding block after block, but she grows. She proclaims the divinity of her birth in every part of her structure; she wears upon her bosom the signet of the High God. Like a tree, or a flower, she is perfect in all the essentials of her organism; in-

stinct with the life of her Founder, she grows and enlarges until all the families of earth shall rest in her bosom, and worship at her shrines; until the light and splendor of the Church militant melt away into the glory of the Church triumphant.

F. R. A.

May 8, 1857.

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THE

ISRAELITE AND THE CHRISTIAN.

CHAPTER I.

THE TWO PILGRIMS.

GOD is the source of all life, and the only centre of rest. The transgression that blighted Paradise severed the mystic tie that joined a sinless creation to its Maker, and sent humanity adrift upon a restless sea of passion. Covered by a starless night and swept by fierce storms, the ocean of human life cast its wealth of priceless souls on the bleak rocks of a cheerless eternity. Yet God never had pleasure in the death of sinners; but, mingled with the woes pronounced upon the first offenders, there gleamed the light of a promised Saviour. Even amid the darkness of that night when the star of Revelation had not yet risen in the firmament of a lost world, His voice was heard above the roar of the warring elements of wide-spread corruptions, in those gentle whispers of conscience, by which the obedi-

ent were directed to the haven of safety. A feeble hope gleamed through the deepest gloom of the fallen, intimating to the wretched aliens from heaven the promise of future good. Humanity, cut loose from the great central force of spiritual life and harmony, was agitated by sad disorders, and its passions glowed with unholy fires; yet, amid all its wanderings, it still felt the stirrings of a sublime instinct, which, like a ray from the eternal throne, gave a dim conception of its origin and destiny. Painfully conscious of the insufficiency of those resources within him to secure his happiness, man sought without and beyond himself that soul-filling object for which his spirit yearned. "In a word, God has never ceased to be the want of the human race. Alas! their homage wanders from its proper object, their worship becomes depraved, their piety itself is impious; the religions of the earth are an insult to the unknown God, who is their object." With mistaken, nay monstrous conceptions of the Supreme Being, they dishonored God and debased themselves. Tossed to and fro by opposing forces, the soul was bewildered amid the mazes of profound mysteries, oscillating between heaven and earth, dragged to the dust by its corruptions, yet impelled towards the skies, its painful outcries for help touched the heart of the compassionate Redeemer, who came to her rescue.

It will not appear singular, that we rank human destiny among the noblest themes that can engage the intellect of man. It is a subject of vast compass—profound in its mysteries, sublime in its interests, and gathering about its issues the grandeurs of eternity. It is therefore eminently worthy of earnest thought

and careful study. Man is immortal! He had a beginning—he shall have no end. Gifted with an imperishable soul, he shall outlive the convulsions of the final day. He shall hear the trumpet that wakes the dead—he shall see the Judge of the quick and dead descending on His great white throne—he shall behold “the new heavens and the new earth,” issuing in robes of gorgeous glory from the wreck of matter. But his immortality may be blessed or wretched—garnished with a splendor more brilliant than the sun; or marred by dark and distressing woes. His thoughts, his aspirations, and the activities which make up his daily life, are now fashioning that destiny which stretches into the mysterious bosom of interminable ages. He is every moment progressing towards the solemn realities of an endless future. He shall forever move within the grand circle of a happy eternity, thrilled with ineffable rapture, or weep in anguish under the weight of unutterable woes. In passing to that wider theatre of spiritual activity, he is urged forward, willing or unwilling; for progress is an imperative law of spirit. The force of ten thousand wills could not arrest his advancement—no combination of human energy can stop the wheels of his destiny; they move with the same unfaltering certainty as the wheels of the universe; for the same God has ordained them, the same Almighty Being imparts to them their power of motion.

Endowed with intelligence, the pilgrim to another world enjoys the high prerogative of choosing his road and destination. But his choice may be influenced; and therefore a merciful God plies his mind with mo-

tives whose circling sweep gathers within its compass all that is great and glowing in time and eternity. The Lord of glory is not an indifferent spectator of the moulding life of man. God has not ceased to love our rebellious race. He has made it possible for his exiled children to return to their Father's house. A throne of glory and a crown of life are made accessible through faith.

Ever since the fall of Adam, Divine Mercy has been active in maturing a plan of reconciliation through which the breach occasioned by sin in the moral universe might be healed. God has opened "a new and living way," through the great Redeemer, by which the outcasts from His favor may return to a blissful and everlasting home in heaven. This abode of the blest is made glorious by the unveiled perfections of the Holy Trinity. It is pictured in the Bible under the most gorgeous imagery; and, to the eye of faith, it looms out in the celestial canopy, glowing with light and flashing with the holiness of God. The gates of that heavenly city are now open and accessible; the path leading to its joys is crimsoned by a Saviour's blood, it shines with the Redeemer's righteousness. To acquaint us with the character of its inhabitants and the nature of the place and its employments, to induce us to enter upon the road that conducts to the realization of heavenly delights, and to animate us in our progress towards that beautiful immortality of the saints, God has given us an infallible guide. His word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. That word abounds in all needful instruction to make our pilgrimage pleasant, and to crown it with a glorious

consummation. The Lord speaks to us through this medium, in language as beautiful as it is impressive. Sometimes in simple precepts, then in signs and wonders, and, yet again do the utterances of the Almighty come from the shrine of His Holy Oracles clothed in lofty examples, or shrouded in mysterious symbols. His will, however, is clearly revealed, His commandments are easily understood. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the word of the Lord is pure, making wise the simple." But while our duty is plain, and the road in which He would have us go is made manifest step by step, that part of our history which lies in the future is shrouded in mystery. An angel may not even lift the veil to unfold the untried realities that are to form a part of our experience. We are travellers, journeying for the first time over life's road, and all along our path objects rise up, and events transpire, that pleasantly or painfully affect us. That we are, however, on our way to Zion, and pursuing the appropriate course, may be inferred with absolute certainty by those way-marks set up by the Holy Ghost to guide the faithful; for when our spiritual realizations correspond with the record of those who have passed over the same road, and reached the land of rest in safety, we may take courage, and press forward towards the mark of the prize of our high calling.

The Hebrews were a chosen people—theirs was an exalted mission. With them was commenced the structure of that kingdom whose grandeur will eclipse the splendor of all earthly empires. In them was laid the foundation of that spiritual temple whose dimensions

are vast as the world, and which humanity will yet make vocal with the hallelujahs of redemption. The purposes of Divine mercy were shrouded in their dispensation, circulated through their body politic, and vibrated in all their ceremonies, because their nationality canopied the scheme of salvation. They were the soil in which the mustard seed of Christ's kingdom was planted—the pearl of great price was hid among their treasures. No other nation could boast such an origin; none else sustains the same relative importance to the entire world. Their history is a mine from which ages have been quarrying golden treasures—to the studious it still yieldeth jewels. Philosophy, history, literature, and religion have received invaluable contributions from this source. Jehovah exalted them above all other people; for to their keeping were entrusted the oracles of truth. This was a distinguished favor, and made them an unfailing fountain of instruction to mankind. But the most notable mark of the Divine favor we recognise in the fact, that the Hebrew nation was the ordained instrumentality through which the unsearchable riches of a Saviour's love were conveyed to our fallen world. It is chiefly to be ascribed to this, that all the elements of their history, as also their rites and ceremonies, are invested with a profound spiritual significance; so that, from whatever point the dispensation of Moses may be contemplated, the light of its ministrations converges in manifold rays around the cross of Calvary. Their religious solemnities were emblematic of a spiritual organization, that should be evolved out of the ancient economy, far superior to that from whose ashes it arose. "But if the minis-

tration of death, written and engraven in stone, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses, for the glory of his countenance — which glory was to be done away. How shall not the ministration of the Spirit be more glorious. “For, if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.” “For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never, with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect.” And as their imposing solemnities were symbolic of the blessed realizations of Christianity, so also was their experience a counterpart of that which transpires in those who believe in Jesus Christ.

It was manifestly the intention of God that the entire history of His chosen people should be instinct with a lofty and holy meaning. It is a record of humanity in its struggles from a deep debasement to exalted freedom, and is therefore a record of life, of spiritual manifestations and Divine wonders. And as the Schekinah which guided Israel through the desert infolded such a measure of the Divine glory, that it streamed through every fissure until the whole cloud was glowing with light, so, also, does the history of God’s chosen inshroud the mysteries and glories of the Incarnation, that from every point there are radiations of the glory of Jesus. It is not singular that the omniscient God should order all the incidents which make up the history of the ancient dispensation, so as to adumbrate the excellency of the new, of which the former was typical.

Such a view of the purposes of the ancient economy commends itself to the judgment of man, because it is in harmony with the character of the Most High, and for as much as it is in accordance with the general plan of the Divine procedure. As in the vast organism of nature there exists nothing in vain, but everything is fulfilling a wise design, so also, is there nothing chronicled in the Holy Scriptures that is not eminently fitted to instruct. All those amazing structures that float majestically through the limitless immensity around us are vocal with utterances of the greatness of the adorable Sovereign that formed and sustains them. "The heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament showeth his handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." And, if the spangled firmament, together with the vast materialism beneath and beyond it, are endowed with the power of proclaiming the might, the majesty and glory of the invisible Creator, why should it be thought incredible, that Jehovah designed to instruct a lost world by the history of a nation of immortal beings? If the winged cloud, the circling wave, the rolling planet and the twinkling stars, all bear messages of Divinity to thoughtful minds, how much more impressively and thrillingly do the solemnities of the Jewish altar, with its bleeding victim and the other symbols of their religion, address the sensibilities of the human heart. There is language that disdains the drapery of words, and the most stirring truths often

reach the inmost soul without any conventional forms. The silent eloquence of a holy shrine is far more effective in subduing the passions, than the most winning strains from human lips ; and the image of one who embodied in his character exalted virtues, will more readily excite lofty sentiments in the observer than the best homily ever written or spoken. To my mind, the symbols of the Jewish economy, instituted by the command of the Lord, are invested with a sanctity that commands the homage of the heart. I have felt the magic power of eloquence as the orator plied my mind with soul-stirring truths, and often has he kindled my feelings into holy ardor with the fire that came flashing through his eye ; but, I feel a holier pathos, I am conscious of a loftier enthusiasm, when I stand in the presence of those symbols of the Divine perfections which meet me on every hand. Withdrawn from the stirrings of a busy world, and having for my companions trees, fountains, birds, or Nature in her varied works, whose speech is more direct, whose lessons, though often imperfectly understood, are more powerful and subduing—I feel that God is in these utterances that come from the shrines of Nature. When addressed by man, my prejudices or skepticism may challenge his argument, but, when the Lord Jehovah speaks my soul bows in humble submission to His authority. The messages of God are veiled in all the mercies vouchsafed to Israel—in all their rites and ceremonials there lay, concealed from the vulgar eye, the sublime mysteries of Christ's redemption. The elements of their history and worship are speaking monuments of God's goodness and severity. The present condition of the

seed of Abraham painfully illustrates the dread calamities that accompany a rejection of the Messiah; and thus, in like manner, is their early history fraught with many holy lessons.

But, if there is any part of that history specially instructive to the Christian, it is the portion which embraces the humiliation of the Hebrews in Egypt, their deliverance, their flight from the pursuing oppressor, their miraculous escape, and their progress to a settlement in the promised land. Within the circle of that period of time there is much written for our profit. At every stage in our progress towards heaven, we may find much in the history of the Israelite in his wanderings to encourage our hope and fortify our faith. Could the hand of the skilful artist delineate with his pencil all the events that transpired during that part of their history, we would contemplate on the glowing canvas a graphic picture of those moral exercises which transpire in the Christian soul; for the spiritual realizations of the pilgrim to heaven, from the time of his deliverance from the bondage of sin to his entrance into the glories of eternal life, all entered in an outward sense into the experience of the Israelite. In view of this fact, that checkered scene of the life of the Hebrew, as unfolded on the sacred page, offers many lessons of wisdom, gratitude, humility and faith to the Christian. The trials and successes, the sorrows and the joys of God's ancient people, are still a valuable inheritance to His chosen. The careful student of the mysterious Past and of the eventful Present, will readily perceive, from an examination of his own heart, that the manifold imperfections of the He-

brews were not peculiarities of that age, but then, as now, the legitimate products of vitiated human nature. He will observe that their temptations, their conflicts and their triumphs were images of those which enter into every believer's life; and that the deliverances vouchsafed to them, and the Divine wonders wrought in their behalf, which glow all along their progress, are now repeated in the experience of the pilgrim to the heavenly Canaan. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work." The historical part of the Holy Record is frequently more instructive than the doctrinal, for the reason, that it is often a practical illustration of doctrine. The more fully we learn to comprehend those voices coming from the dread shrines of the mysterious Past, and the more thoroughly we may understand the symbolic utterances of the Bible, the more elevated and cordial will be our admiration of that Being—"Who ordereth all things after the counsel of his own will." Entertaining these convictions, I regard it as no unreasonable assumption that, by giving us the particulars which pleasantly or painfully affected the Israelites on their journey to the land "flowing with milk and honey," God designed that, in addition to its historical value in other respects, their experience should be, to His church, invested with a lofty spiritual import. He meant to portray, by their abject bondage and affecting humiliation under Pharaoh, the wretched condition and deep degradation of the sinner. The Egyptian oppressor stood in the same

relation to them as sin and the Law do to the unregenerate. The shaking of that kingdom, and the desolations poured out upon the land of their sufferings, image those spiritual convulsions of the soul when its redemption draweth nigh. Their flight, and the terror inspired by their furious pursuers, find a parallel in the flight of the trembling sinner, and the thunders of a violated law in the ears of the penitent, fleeing to the refuge set before him in the gospel. Their passage through the sea, in which transaction God alone is mighty and glorious, and man nothing, we have represented the work of regeneration, that originates and ends in the wisdom and power of God. Their wanderings through the desert, and their onward struggles towards Palestine, are full of illustrations of the conflicts and struggles of the immortal spirit in its progress towards that kingdom "which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." In the study of that portion of Hebrew history already indicated, we shall find much that will shed light on scenes, otherwise intricate and dark, through which the path to glory lies — yea, much that will shed a cheerful lustre over the Christian's life, and gild his spiritual horizon with the golden tints of that promised glory which is in reversion for the saints of God. The prayerful contemplation of this record, brought under our view, will also increase our estimate of the infinite value of the Bible, and enlarge our conceptions of the boundless spiritual treasures which a merciful God has here deposited. And, while we gather gems from this spiritual mine wherewith to decorate the crown of Jesus, and enrich our souls with treasures, of which neither time nor

thieves can deprive us, we trust, that our appreciation of God's word and of his goodness will be promoted. Realizing, as I humbly do, that, to derive benefit from the study of a book and to form a true estimate of its value, we must to some extent have the feelings and the spirit of the author, I would fervently implore the baptism of the Holy Ghost, that I may truly apprehend and faithfully interpret those symbols and experiences of the Israelites, which that Spirit made prophetic of the glories of the Christian religion. O thou Eternal Father! give us that wisdom which first inspired the Holy Oracles; reveal to us the things that we know not; cause us to understand the sorrows and joys of Thy people; and, when we have heard the sighs and groans of our Pilgrims in their prison-house, help us to rejoice with them in their emancipation, and attend them with cheerful steps through this desert world to the heavenly Canaan—the holy! the everlasting home of the true Israelite and the faithful Christian!

CHAPTER II.

THE PILGRIMS IN BONDAGE.

Read Exodus i., 13, 14; Rom. vii., 14-25.

THE history of the Jewish nation opens under a dark canopy. It presents to our view the members of the Hebrew commonwealth amid the gloomy foldings of a cloud, freighted with the weightiest calamities that ever crushed immortal spirits. The inheritance transmitted to them by their fathers stands out in the dim distance of the Past—marred by tears, and stained with blood. Bondsmen of Pharaoh, they were subject to the arbitrary and despotic will of inhuman taskmasters; and therefore realized, to their sorrow, that power was on the side of the oppressor. Laboring in tears, and toiling without hope, they offered a melancholy spectacle to angels. Such a condition contrasted sadly with those magnificent promises made to their fathers, and must have remained inexplicable to them while they were in abject servitude to idolators. But is not the entire history of Israel full of the marvellous?

Egypt was the birth-place of their nationality. The Hebrews were indeed a chosen people, but they were not a constituted nation until the period of the Exodus. Their origin has no parallel; they were indebted to the direct exertion of Almighty power for their existence as a people. Abraham was called by God to a sublime mission; and, that the hand of the Lord might

be clearly manifest in laying the foundation of a new empire, his servant was separated from his people, transplanted into a strange land, where he might flourish as the parent stock of a tree that should fill the world. At the age of seventy-five, the call and the promise came to Abraham, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee." The reason for this separation from his friends is contained in the promise: "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and will curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Abraham continued many years after his marriage without offspring; but the Lord promised to raise up children unto him. He therefore brought into existence, by His creative power, a people through whom the work of redemption might be accomplished. To form a distinct nation, and to originate a new order of things, it was absolutely necessary to separate Abraham from his people, and to postpone the birth of Isaac to such an advanced age of his parents, that the Divine agency in raising up this son, "as from one who was as good as dead," might be so palpable as to shame the scepticism of man. Had he continued to reside with his kindred, and had he been blessed with children at the usual age, he would have been recognised only as a continued link in the chain of existence, and not as the chosen instrument of a chosen race. But in the transplanting of Abraham to a strange country, and the founding of a new family, and a new order of things,

the interposition of Jehovah is as marked in the origin, as it is all through the growth and expansion of this empire, whose fragments are this day scattered through every clime on our globe. Scarcity of food drove Abraham and his wife to Egypt; the hand of God there wrought wonders to restore to him the companion of his bosom, and to bring him honorably and safely back to his home. This deliverance was prophetic of a similar, but much more magnificent spectacle, in the subsequent history of his descendants.

The promises made to Abraham were successively inherited by Isaac and Jacob, as the legitimate heirs of the covenant. Again were the dwellers in Canaan visited with a dreadful famine, and in the councils of the patriarch it was resolved to repair to Egypt to buy corn. An all-wise and merciful Providence had placed Joseph in authority, and invested him with power, that he might provide a home and food for the people of God. The inscrutable counsels of the Lord protracted their stay in Egypt. "This emigration to Egypt was, without doubt, directed by the Lord for the purpose of guarding against the dispersion of the family, as well as against the admixture with strangers, during the important period which had arrived, in which it was appointed to be developed as a nation." Here, surrounded by idolators, that nation was generated; and their bondage, long and painful as it was, constituted the birth-throes without which there could have been no nation born.

When we attentively contemplate the severity of their bondage during the long night of their affliction, we do not wonder that their sighs and groans awakened

sympathy in heaven. But do not God's holy ones behold a large portion of the human family the victims of a more painful vassalage, and writhing under a more afflictive thralldom? Yea, the Prince of the powers of darkness is a hard master, and sin is a cruel and wasting bondage; yet, infatuated millions voluntarily abide in the servitude of Satan, and kiss the chains of their infamy. To restore the guilty captives of sin to spiritual freedom in the kingdom of grace, and thence to conduct them to thrones of glory, "He of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write," appeared on earth. Jesus has published "the acceptable year," and announced it as His mission "to proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound," and now leads on souls ransomed by His blood, in that spiritual exodus to the Canaan of endless rest. To assure those who are languishing in a loathsome captivity, of His ability to break their shackles, to free their souls from the dominion of sin, and of his power to bring them into a state of exaltation and glory at God's right hand, is a primary and most delightful duty which I owe to my readers. The incidents that attended the bondage in Egypt find many parallels in those which are the inevitable accompaniments of a life spent in sin. Many of these features are sketched by the pencil of inspiration, and the task which I have assigned myself is to gather the living images portrayed by the Holy Ghost, and unite them into a full portrait of the soul in the bondage of Satan. To receive those lively impressions which a vivid picture of the experience of our Pilgrims is fitted to produce, it will be necessary to contemplate

the Israelite and the Christian under those various aspects in which the Scriptures present them to our view. Before we attend them on their homeward pilgrimage, let us linger a moment by the house of their bondage, and examine their lamentable state.

The bondage of the Israelite is, in all its prominent aspects, symbolic of the condition of man as a sinner. The former was born in a state of servitude. The child of a bondman, the law recognised him as the property of the Egyptian crown. He had no right to the use of his person, neither was he master of his will; for his soul and his body, in respect to this world, were at the disposal of his cruel oppressor. His time, his energies, and his blood were devoted to the building of treasure-cities for Pharaoh, or such other service as his master might require at his hands. Absolutely and unconditionally in subjection to another, he exemplified man's state as a sinner. Hear the confession of one whose mind had been illumined by the Divine Spirit, and who had been awakened to behold the sad disorders of his state—"Behold I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me." The child inherits the depravity of its parents—so that, by Nature, all are children of wrath.

While it is not my purpose to enter largely into the discussion of the fall and depravity of the human race, it is yet necessary, at this point, to refute in a concise way the errors of scepticism. That man is corrupt, impelled by vicious desires, and has upon his spiritual organization the tokens of a deep degradation, is a fact so well authenticated by observation and our consciousness, as to render all argument superfluous. But, it

has been triumphantly asked, how can one sin before he is born? How can an infinitely just God impute to a child, born to day, a crime committed six thousand years ago, and in which his will had no participation? It would be a sufficient answer to those who profess to have difficulties on this subject, that they confound original with actual sin. But as this is the groundwork upon which a part of the edifice which we are about constructing must repose, it will not be inappropriate to dispel the darkness that surrounds the problem of human corruption. The first man by an act of transgression passed into a state of death. God is the source of life—the purity of unfallen man permitted a vital union with his Creator—he could not rebel against God without rupturing that bond of union, and thereby inflicting death upon himself. “The wages of sin is death.” His intellect, being alienated from the primal light, was shrouded in darkness. His will, by its rebellion against holiness, and its opposition to the love of supreme beauty, wrested from itself that original force to choose the right, and it became the sport of the vilest appetites. The blight of death fell upon all his superior faculties; sin struck them in a measure powerless, and that empire where the intellect and conscience once reigned supreme over the appetites and passions, was bereft of its order and harmony, and turned into a state of anarchy. Spiritual death was the necessary result of the soul’s divorcement from God, the source of its life; and corporal death, from the tendency of the body to separate itself from the soul. Not only within, but without, death reigned. Nature was smitten, and, writhing in

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anguish from the wounds inflicted, was no longer a Paradise of flowers and of fountains, but its laws and forces were marshalled into an avenging host of heaven, to punish the crime that covered the spotless creation with the pall of death. Adam having experienced in his entire organization the deplorable change which sin was threatened to produce, imparted to his posterity the properties of his own disordered nature. The child must be as the parent. He could not communicate to others that which he no longer possessed, for death cannot engender life. It is a false assumption then that we sinned before we came into being; "for we were in Adam only by our nature, and it is by our nature, and not by an act of our own will, that we are at our birth children of wrath." It is then without injustice that God detests in us what he finds in us—a soul brutalized by ignoble inclination, in which He can recognise neither His workmanship nor His likeness.

The germs of evil are, therefore, incorporated into our being at the first dawn of our existence; they are properties of our nature, which require only certain conditions to promote their growth, and they will in due time produce a harvest of misery. How sad the reflection, when we look upon the unconscious and beautiful babe, that, underneath that image of loveliness there reposes an immortal germ that may unfold its energies in a life of rebellion—that shall send waves of desolation over the bosom of society—revel amid sinful indulgences which will sweep it into a cheerless eternity, and be the instrument of untold sorrows to others. But, against this suggestion, we may plant our hope in that scheme of grace devised by infinite

love, whereby we obtain life in Jesus far superior to that which we lost in Adam. Most assuredly there is no cause to murmur, since our humanity, sunk to such depths by the crime of Eden, has been exalted by the redemption of Calvary to the throne of the universe in the person of Jesus, who is pledged to bring all who love Him to a participation of His own happiness and glory in heaven.

Bondage, whether temporal or spiritual, is painful and debasing, in all its influences upon its subject. The abject condition of the poor Israelite must excite the compassion of every humane soul. Cursed with task-masters void of tenderness, and burdened with labor too exhausting to his strength, he groaned away his life in his galling fetters. Slavery, in all ages and in its various modifications, from the time of the patriarchs to the present—in its mildest, as in its severest forms—must from its very nature affect injuriously the enslaved. Yet its evils do not terminate upon those who are in bonds, but its enervating and blighting influence is often more painfully visible upon those who are free. The humane and conscientious, who have been entrusted with the guardianship of those who are recognised as bondsmen, have found their position irksome and their responsibility oppressive. Slaves are shut out from those resources which are absolutely essential to the intellectual and moral improvement of man; so that few, very few in that deplorable state, rise to exalted excellence. Among the Jews, every jubilee brought with it the emancipation of all who were voluntarily or involuntarily in bondage. Among the

Greeks and Romans slaves enjoyed certain privileges, and yet they felt it to be an intolerable burden. What a melancholy chapter of woes would be made up, if all the tears and sufferings of the Israelite among his barbarous oppressors could be summed up? Notwithstanding the ameliorating influences of civilization and Christianity of the present time, multitudes who are in bondage are in a lamentable state of ignorance and vice. What, if their life is soothed by the kindness of affectionate masters? Though happy and contented amid the associations and endearments of that home circle where gentle spirits blend, yet are the tokens of a deep degradation upon them. There is nothing in the relation they sustain to society, fitted to infuse energy, or to kindle the hope of gain or honor, in the bosom of the enslaved. To them the fountains of knowledge are sealed—the mines of intellectual wealth are closed against them—and, they are like hapless wanderers in a dark night, when no star flashes in the sky, but storms and tempests are abroad, sweeping the gloomy canopy, and the moaning winds sigh in sympathy with those weary spirits of a mournful destiny. God never made man only to toil and to die—neither has He delegated absolute power over body and soul to any one over his fellow, because the infinitely benevolent Sovereign is alone able rightfully to exercise such authority. While it is obvious to every judicious inquirer that there are circumstances when humanity and religion prompt man either to assume or to retain the condition of master, there is no properly constituted mind that will vindicate oppression. But, at that period of the world when the Hebrews were held under an ig-

noble servitude in Egypt, it was usual to inflict cruelties upon captives, from which the most insensible to human suffering would now shrink with horror. Civilization has exerted a refining influence upon mankind, and Christianity has waked into lively action the gentler instincts of human nature, so that, in the sufferings of those writhing under the most heartless despotism, we could not now find instances of cruelty, such as the seed of Abraham endured in the house of their bondage.

The condition of man in his unregenerate state must be inconceivably wretched, when the Omniscient Spirit has used the most abject and distressing situation in human experience, as a type of his spiritual state. In the Epistle to the Ephesians, the apostle reminds them of their wretchedness prior to their conversion to Christianity. "Wherefore remember, that at that time, ye were without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promise, without hope and without God in the world." For a being with immortal powers, there could be no condition this side of bottomless perdition more wretched and hopeless than that pictured by the apostle. Yet that is the actual state of all impenitent sinners. If they are not the subjects of Jesus, where do they belong? If aliens from God's holy commonwealth, they are members of the empire of darkness. As they are without God, they are with Satan. Destitute of hope, they are in darkness and heirs of despair. If not the free men of Christ, they are the slaves of sin. Alas! that there should be so many in the bondage of corruption. Behold man in this unhappy condition, the

victim of a dark depravity, which, if unrestrained, will hurry him to terrible degradation! A soul in bonds—its noble faculties in debasing fetters, what a spectacle to angels! Though you hear not the clanking chains, nor see the lacerations produced by the scourge of vitiated appetites, nor the incessant goadings of its merciless tyrant, yet there it is, dragging its fetters, and urging its weary way along towards the bottomless gulf. This spiritual bondage is far more blighting in its effects upon his immortal nature, than the servitude of Egypt was upon the unfortunate Israelite. They might compel the Hebrew to the most menial service, and wound, and scar his back until the trickling blood would mingle with his tears, yet his thoughts might defy the oppressor, and, while his weary limbs were trailing in the dust, his mind might soar into the high heavens, and hold communion with its God. But the worst aspect of the bondage of Satan is, that it extends its subduing power to all the faculties of man's being. Behold the inhabitants of Eden, unfallen, innocent, and happy! Paradise is radiant in its sinless glory; angels are the companions of the human pair, and they rejoice in the presence of God. Then, untainted and without guilt, the incense of praise ascends continually from the altar of their hearts, glowing with love to God. They eat the forbidden fruit, and how changed the scene in them and their charming abode! Their glory is turned into shame; guilt and remorse supplant that sweet serenity of mind which conscious innocence gave. Appalled by their horrid crime, angels fly away on swift wing from the guilty

pair. How different must have been their feelings on that evening after the transgression, at the hour of their vespers. Once ministering at the altar of this vast temple as the high priest of this world and the acknowledged lord of creation, all creatures, the elements, the air, and earth, and sea, joined Adam in his hymn of praise to God. But now they stand there as guilty culprits, whose rash hand had drawn the dark covering of a universal curse over God's holy and happy creation. What a tremendous crime, that threw all nature into paroxysms of anguish, and fastened its woes and its fetters upon all things! How has the gold been tarnished! how has the fine gold grown dim! Ever since that deplorable event has the human soul been the seat of unholy passions; the heart became the home of envy, malice, and revenge. Sin has sown seeds of disease in his constitution, poisoned the fountain of his life, and covered him with wounds and bruises, so that, from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet there is no soundness. Sin is the parent of all his woes and disappointments. It has made his body frail, and converted all the elements into enemies, that war against his life and peace. But the worst of all its miseries entailed upon our race, is its enslaving power. It has laid its skeleton hands upon all his faculties. It reigns in the evil propensities of our nature, and dominates in the passions, so that it makes all the members of the body instruments of unrighteousness and sin. Melancholy as the influences of sin are upon the body, it has carried more terrible disasters over the intellectual and moral natures of man. It has played sad havoc among

the intellectual powers; it has clouded reason, impaired the judgment, enfeebled the imagination, and prevented the will, so that the mind with all its noble faculties is made the servant of sin. What a pitiable object is man in such a state, and at enmity with God? His energies, which should act in unison with the Divine government, are consecrated to the work of opposing the Sovereign of the Universe, and waging an insane warfare against the kingdom of light. He is a child of darkness, contending against his immortal interests, and in opposition to the glory of God's universe. Oh! what a debasing servitude, what an abhorrent slavery is that, which intoxicates and infatuates a deathless spirit to arm itself against God, and plant within its bosom barbed arrows that will rankle forever. Such soul must be as blind as it is servile, or it could not enter into this work of self-destruction with all its fearful energies.

In addition to the deep wounds which sin inflicts upon its servant, it assists the individual to wield a fearful power to corrupt and destroy others. It is appalling to contemplate the wide-spread disasters to which a mind, girded with strength and stored with knowledge, can give birth in human society. The character of the sinner reproduces itself in the lives of those whom he impregnates with his principles; and all his offspring, physical, moral, or intellectual, are possessed of a procreating power of evil. Have we not, then, a faithful picture in the Israelite begotten in slavery, and begetting others in his bondage—of the sinner conceived and born in sin, and perpetuating his

depravity in those to whom he gives existence? But the portrait of this bondage is not yet complete in all its outlines, for sin also enslaves and blights the heart. It divests the moral nature of purity, of excellence, and goodness. It enfeebles and crushes the nobler instincts of the emotional nature, and in multitudes dries up the fountains of sympathy and compassion. The affections are enslaved by lust; "and lust, when it has conceived, bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, death." The whole moral nature is so shattered and vitiated, that it takes pleasure in unrighteousness. Our blood would run cold, and horror would seize upon our minds, did we see an angel descending from God's throne to soil his plumage with the pollutions of earth; and yet, those who are but a little lower than the angels revel in moral filth, until every attribute that proclaims their relationship to heaven is obliterated. Hearken to the language of those who, for the first time, realize their sad condition as slaves of sin: "Behold, I am vile." "We are all as an unclean thing, and our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." "Unclean, unclean! God be merciful to us sinners." "If I wash myself never so clean in snow-water, yet wilt thou cast me into the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me." The Saviour declares that "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, and all uncleanness." Jeremiah draws a faithful picture when he exclaims, "The heart is deceitful and desperately wicked." Paul, when startled from his dream of Pharisaical righteousness, declares, "For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that

which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing." Could we see that heart upon which the Holy Ghost has poured His light, as God sees it, we would start affrighted from the spectacle. We would behold all the affections bound to sinful objects, all the impulses, inclinations, and emotions manacled by the strong fetters of vice, making man loathsome in his own sight. And though he may honestly and sincerely resist temptation, yet, like a slave, he is lashed into service which he hates, by the terrible master "who takes him captive at his will." All imagery fails to portray fully the abject condition to which sin reduces its subjects. The description given by Paul in his letter to the Romans is, however, not only a faithful delineation of the unregenerate state, but sad, as it is appalling: "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies, and even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of murder, envy, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." Could there be

an assemblage of attributes more repulsive? could the pen of inspiration draw a picture more appalling? The souls in this spiritual bondage are completely given up to Satan. They are totally vitiated while harboring this brood of hell, and yet so fascinated by the destroyer, that with a full knowledge of impending wrath, they commit such crimes with the wrath of God flaming around them. All impenitent persons do not exhibit this matured wickedness, but they carry in their nature all the elements which, if unrestrained, will develop into that terrible portrait drawn by inspiration. Contemplate the state of the slave of sin, and tell me whether the Israelite in his bondage does not truthfully symbolize the condition in which the Christian once groaned as a sinner? Look at yourself, unconverted man! are you not conscious of this debasing service? this abject bondage of corruption to which your soul is reduced? I appeal to the record of your experience—to your conscience—your God!

The Israelite as a bondsman was not only wretched, but helpless. Power was on the side of his oppressor; he could not deliver himself from that painful servitude.

The sinner is also destitute of the needful resources to disenthral himself; Satan holds him firmly in his chains. He cannot break the fetters that bind his soul to lust; he has need of a Deliverer. As, in Egypt, many died in their bondage, and never tasted freedom, nor walked forth under the heavens with the conscious joy of freemen, so do many that are born in sin die in their bondage, and never taste the liberty of God's children. And, as the outstretched arm of Jehovah broke the tyrant's spell and crushed the

oppressor, while he led the Israelite triumphantly out of the scenes of his humiliation, to an exaltation glorious, with songs of deliverance, so, surely will He help and deliver the soul that cries to Him for succor. Behold, an Almighty Saviour cries to the perishing, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth!" Look and live, O ye enslaved, ye dying sinners! Lift your eyes to Calvary, and you shall have freedom and life.

CHAPTER III.

THE DIVINE SOLICITUDE FOR THE PILGRIMS IN THEIR BONDAGE.

Read Psalm 105, 1-11.

THE inhabitants of the earth are sometimes shrouded in obscurity; when that sheet of darkness which hides the glorious heavens from their view is glowing with sunlight on the other side. Thus, also, may human destiny be infolded in clouds of mystery perfectly dark to us, but flashing with Divine mercy to other eyes, and eventually bursting forth to our view in the light of joyful deliverance. A series of Providential mysteries brought about the enslavement of Israel in Egypt — another succession of Divine operations were put in motion to work out their redemption. The reasons which were influential in ordaining the discipline of the Hebrew race may never become fully manifest; some, however, are easily understood. They were set apart for a high and holy mission, and all that entered into their training was doubtless necessary to fit them for the accomplishment of that work to which they were called.

The benevolent Author of our being has so happily constituted the human mind, that, when destitute of resources to better its condition, it submits to the misfortunes which necessity imposes. The Israelite may have been satisfied in a measure with his unenviable

state, since his servitude seemed unavoidable, his escape hopeless; and, if a thought of liberty occasionally passed out from that dreary scene of his arduous toil, and aspirations rose beyond the range of his servile labors, they were quickly dismissed as he looked upon his feebleness, and at the power of his oppressors. Having no hope of deliverance, he yielded to his hard fate. It requires a course of disastrous events to extinguish the hope that burns in the human breast; it is the last thing man will relinquish, for, when it is gone, desolation and death come. Is it not then a sad crisis in an immortal's history, when he yields to despair? He then sinks into a sullen gloom; his energies are unstrung, his heart is dark and cheerless. Poor Hebrew! without hope, and knowing no deliverer, you may well be pardoned for dismissing all concern for the future. The sun rose to day on your bondage, it will look down to-morrow on your weary slavery. The experience of the Egyptian slave is reflected in the despairing child of sin. He makes a few efforts to disenthral his soul, but, finding the fetters of vice hard to be broken, and the grasp of evil habits firm, he ceases to contemplate with horror his exile from heaven. He opposes not the force of manly resolution to the urgency of his passions; he breasts not the swelling current of iniquity with a brave heart, but is borne upon its bosom towards a dark destiny.

When despair had gathered its gloomy folds around the heart of the Israelite, he neither coveted liberty, nor attempted to be free. God was not unmindful of him. The eye that never slumbers saw his helplessness, and the ear of Him who occupies the throne of

universal dominion heard his cries : " God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." There could scarcely be conceived a more forcible representation of the sinner's helpless state ; neither could we find a more striking emblem of the Divine solicitude for his deliverance from the power of Satan, and his restoration to the favor of heaven. This sleepless solicitude for the welfare of His covenant people, affords an amazing exhibition of the greatness of God's mercy. The Hebrews gradually surrendered their homage to idols, and forgot what was due to their father's God, but He did not forget them ; and while, consenting to the worship of false gods, they joined their oppressors in pouring contempt upon the Divine government, their injured Sovereign was meditating their deliverance. Notwithstanding the insensibility of heart induced by their degradation, and the ignorance that clouded their perceptive faculties, they might have recognised, in those visible interpositions of Divine power, the pulsations of a father's compassion. He who rules the secret springs of the human heart, restrained their oppressors until they had multiplied into a numerous people ; then, as the time of their deliverance drew nigh, God permitted the fears of the Egyptians to be excited, and their cruelty to be augmented. " And Pharaoh said, Come on, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that when there falleth out a war, they join also our enemies and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land." The result of the king's deliberations was to impose new burdens ; but, while the outward pressure was thus

augmented, God replenished their inward strength, and they multiplied more than at any previous period.

The compassion of heaven is, in like manner, exemplified towards those who are in the bondage of sin. Though unmindful of the source of their mercies, and sustaining a constant attitude of hostility toward God, He pities the impenitent. They sin with a high hand, and are disobedient, rebellious, and unholy, yet does a Father's heart yearn over His infatuated children. The wicked do not love that beneficent Being, whose goodness shines through the universe—"For the carnal mind is enmity towards God, is not subject to his law, nor indeed can be." They are devoted to vice, and do not simply consecrate their energies to a warfare against the kingdom of heaven, but use their exertions to bring others into the ranks of the enemy. They are corrupt, and the corrupters of others, and thus unite all the forces of their being to that system of evil which fills the world with distressing woes. Is it not singular that the Almighty Sovereign endures the indignities of sinners, or that He refrains from crushing these rebels? Nay, hear it, O ye heavens, He follows them with a yearning heart! Disciples of Jesus, can you look back, without a shudder, upon that period of your life when, infatuated by sin, you lived in contempt of God and His word? Can you survey the dread contrast between God's dealings and your conduct, or recall the dispositions and frames of your minds, while you were the slaves of sin, without trembling? For upon that moral waste of human existence, where no generous emotion, or holy thought was permitted to grow, there played the light of Divine

compassion. The Lord never lost sight of us, though we shunned His presence. His eye followed us in all our wanderings, and His voice, now "still and small," then in tones of thunder, cried—"Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die." His sanctuaries, His gospel, His Sabbaths, and His Bible crowded our way with barriers, that we might pause on the road to perdition. And O, what recollection of the constraining love of Christ, and wooings of the Holy Spirit! How fondly did the heavenly dove hover about our hearts, how He breathed the quickening influences of His grace upon our drowsy sensibilities! He came in the dispensations of Providence, and thrilled in the messages of the sanctuary. In these, and many other interpositions, does our Heavenly Father manifest His solicitude for the recovery of impenitent sinners. Had He withdrawn the gracious influences of His grace from you, who are now expectants of heavenly bliss, and left you alone when you spurned His Spirit, what would you now be? Obdurate sinners, wretched beings, heirs of wo! But, O! the amazing forbearance of your best, but most injured friend, would not let you perish! If you cast your eye over that portion of your existence which is past, you will be constrained to exclaim, "What has God wrought?" His sleepless care presided over your opening life, His goodness crowned it with inestimable blessings, and His grace raised you to that most distinguished of all honors, an heirship to a throne. And such a throne of glory as no age can dim, no time impair; and whose foundations will abide immovable through the convulsions of that final day, which will shake into a heap of ruins all earthly king-

doms and monuments. Surely, there is no possession that you value, but the golden thread of grateful remembrance connects it with the Source of all good. That immortal mind within you, impatient of its confinement, is His gift. That body, which is its present house, was fashioned by the Hand which moulded the stars, that kindled the sun, and that decketh the moon with her glory. He who created Cherubim and Seraphim, and commands the innumerable but exalted hierarchy of heaven, also taught your mind to think, and your heart to love. What does He still do for you? Watches over you with more than parental tenderness, gives His angels charge concerning you, and sends you all your blessings. His sun shines for you—His winds fan you—His seas waft you—His air keeps your lungs in motion—His mercy covers you as with a garment—His earth sustains you, and His heavens open above you to offer you an everlasting home of felicity.

The sufferings induced by the increased burdens of the toiling Hebrews, were so directed by that invisible hand which was moulding their destiny, that they might realize their sad condition, and have begotten in their bosoms desires for deliverance. To make the same number of brick, “and gather their own straw,” was a double task, and weighed heavily upon their hearts; but the blow that prostrates, often casts men upon the everlasting arms which are waiting to raise them to glory and immortality. While bending in tears over their arduous toil, they began to think of Canaan. Their thoughts found relief as they travelled to that land where their fathers had dwelt in peace.

How often do men complain of adversities, when they are blessings in disguise! Ye afflicted, toiling Hebrews, though ye appeared so utterly forsaken of God, when your sad destiny became still darker, and your very life was about to be crushed out of your bodies, ye knew not that this additional hardship was the expedient of the inscrutable counsels of the Most High, that would serve as one of the paths that conducted to your glorious deliverance. Neither could those oppressed ones foresee how, in the mystic future, others would have repeated in them that which was symbolized in their hard experience. None are so prone to murmur against dark and distressing dispensations as the impenitent. They shrink from trials, for they have never explored those gloomy mines of spiritual wealth of which the afflictions of life are the covering. They are appalled by the approach of afflictive dispensations, for they see only the frowns of a displeased sovereign in their misfortunes. All trials might well be dreaded, were they ordained and inflicted by a merciless Power; but, sent by the Father of mercy, and applied for correction by the hand of love, they should be welcomed with the prayer—"What I know not, teach Thou me." As all our chastenings come from God's throne, they are designed to conduct back to God those who are exercised by them in righteousness. Calamities are never sent to crush, but to be wrought into strong pinions, to bear the soul from a world swept by tempests to an immortality bright and glorious. An ancient saint of varied and profound experience says: "Before I was afflicted I went astray." "Before I was afflicted," responds that pale

sufferer on his couch of languishing, "I went astray, but now I keep Thy word." As you look back upon that misfortune which swept away your earthly all, you now regard it as a wave of mercy, though it overwhelmed you at the time with deep grief. Then your spirit sank under the pressure, your soul was bowed down to the dust. Dark and desolate was your condition, when your sources of happiness were dried up, and the light of your joy was extinguished; for you were without reconciliation with heaven, and you dared not seek for comfort in God. Oh! the wretchedness of that hour, when every goodly object melted away under your eye, when you saw the perishableness of all temporal things, and the emptiness of all earthly hopes. Prostrate in spirit, and estranged from heaven, you wished that you had never been born. But that loss of earthly treasure enriched you with immortal good. The Giver had not been recognised or honored in the gift—He withdrew His favor, that you might know that the only abiding prosperity is that which glorifies God. The loss of property and the blight of fortune have made many rich—perhaps in earthly goods; certainly, if the misfortune was instrumental in leading the soul to Christ, with the wealth of eternal glory.

The path of another pilgrim is covered with the shadow of a dark Providence. Sickness falls upon that circle of warm and loving hearts like mildew, and the beautiful flowers that adorn the garden of his home wither under its blighting touch. It was with a heavy heart that you followed that companion, brother, sister, or child, to the grave. A dark sorrow settled on your heart, and a deep grief rolled its bitter waters

through all the channels of your soul. You murmured against God; you said—"Thou destroyest the hope of man;" you wondered what you had done to invite His displeasure, or to deserve this chastening; not conscious, perhaps, at the time, that your affections clung more warmly around the creature than they did about the Creator; and not sensible, till then, that your trust and happiness were sought in a being, as frail as the grass, and whose glory was as transient as the flower of the grass. God knew your heart better than you did yourself; He saw your danger; He loved you, and interposed His providence to save you. He had a place for you in His church, a work for you in His vineyard, a mission for you in the world, which none else could fill, and for which no other discipline could have fitted you. He had a place for you in heaven; a crown of glory, a kingdom imperishable, and a harp of gold—all for you! Yes; and He had prepared a home, in that "house of many mansions," for your family; and as you were not qualifying them for glory, but were so immersed in business or pleasure that your thoughts never rose to the contemplation of the Divine perfections, or the superior bliss of heaven, the Lord took, to the rest that remaineth to the holy, those dear ones, that your aspirations and affections might follow them to His throne. You were like a mariner wafted over a tempestuous sea, under a starless firmament; and God took your jewels and set them near His throne, in the diadem of Jesus, that your eye and heart might be won to the Saviour of sinners. The conception of the poet was as true as it was beautiful, when he sung,

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
 But trust him for his grace ;
 Behind his frowning providence
 He hides a smiling face.
 His purposes will ripen fast,
 Unfolding every hour ;
 The bud may have a bitter taste,
 But sweet will be the flower.

The burdens of life are to men now what the oppressions were to the Israelite in bondage—a merciful discipline, to weary them of sin, the parent of all wo, and the cause of all suffering, and to make bitter the remembrances of their spiritual bondage. In all the misfortunes, afflictions, and bereavements of life we may behold the Divine solicitude for the eternal happiness of souls. He does not willingly afflict the children of men, but for their profit. All need chastening discipline to prepare us for eternal realities. My impenitent reader, will you learn a lesson from the burdened Israelite, and from the Christian once oppressed by guilt? Has God afflicted or bereaved you? Cherish no hard thoughts, give place to no unkind feelings against the All Wise disposer of events, for, in all His dealings He desires to convince you of the instability of earthly things, and to fix your trust upon that which endures forever. In every project that falls out adversely He proclaims His solicitude for your salvation. Every brilliant scheme thwarted by Providence sends up from its ruins the warning—"Hear ye the voice of the rod, and who has appointed it." Fly to Him for refuge, for, behold desolation and death reign beyond the compass of His favor. See you that man far out in the mountains? The sun is suddenly obscured ; the

firmament grows dark; angry clouds are marshalling their chariots for a dread conflict; a solemn quiet pervades all Nature—that stillness which precedes the storm; all voices grow silent; fearfulness and trembling fall upon the beasts of the forest, and they hasten to their retreats; the rushing sounds above announce the warfare of the elements; the heavens flame and flash; the royal thunder shakes the mountain to its centre, and rolls its deep tones through the valleys, until echoed back, and its tremulous vibrations reach the heart of the earth; the man flies for shelter underneath the high rock, and is safe. He abides quietly in the place of his security; the lightning's flash harms him not; the bolt that ploughs the rock does not reach him; he rejoices in his stronghold until the tempest has spent its fury, and then comes forth to look upon Nature, now beautiful in her tears. Unconverted man, imitate the example of this wanderer amid the solitudes of Nature. The storms of life are abroad; afflictions will come; the hour of an accusing conscience is approaching, and the fearful, desolating tempest of Divine wrath is now gathering in the distance; it will one day robe this world in sheets of flame. Fly! oh, fly to the Rock of ages! Cry, when your heart is overwhelmed—“Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.” Fly to the Saviour, for, thus saith the Lord—“Behold a man shall be as a hiding-place, a covert from the storm and windy tempest, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.” Hidden in its clefts, you can look out upon the warring elements in the moral world, and rejoice that the storms of an awakened conscience, and the adversities of life drove

you for help and shelter to the wounds of Jesus. You will bless God for his care and solicitude, manifested in those burdens and trials that resulted in your everlasting salvation.

The Divine solicitude for the children of Abraham was also exhibited in those promises which God had made to their fathers. Canaan was made over to the Hebrews by a solemn covenant. This promise shone in their moral firmament in their darkest hour, and cheered them in their bondage. Jacob had rehearsed God's purposes upon his dying bed. Joseph predicted their return, and charged them to carry his bones with them. The bondsman of sin has like gracious promises of deliverance from the thralldom of Satan. Though destitute of the needful strength to burst his fetters, Almighty power is pledged to break those chains whenever his cry ascends to heaven from a penitential heart. The Deliverer stands ready to help—He is anxious to apply His sovereign power to the rescue of the oppressed. He is willing and able to subdue the foes of the soul, and to lead her forth robed in His spotless righteousness. He came to preach deliverance to the captive, and to let the oppressed go free; to lead forth the prisoners of sin, divested of the badges of slavery and adorned with the vesture of the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty, and proclaim them heirs of heaven. Blessed be God for those gracious promises to the perishing! and blessed be our magnanimous Deliverer, who has brought life and immortality to light! All heaven bends with earnest solicitude over the guilty; angels are ready to rejoice over every one that repenteth. The means

which God employs, His holy word, and His spirit, proclaim that the Lord desires all men to be saved; and in the final day the intelligent universe will bear witness that, if men do perish, God's throne will be spotless. Behold then the uplifted cross! Believe in Jesus and live forever!

CHAPTER IV.

THE PROJECTED DELIVERANCE OF THE ISRAELITE AND THE CHRISTIAN.

Read Exodus ii., 23-25.

THE path to glory lies through suffering. The gem is first ground and burnished by the lapidary, before it learns to sparkle in the sunbeam; and human character will only flash with lofty virtues after it has passed through the crucible of affliction. There has never yet been anything great produced in the universe of matter, or of mind, that was not accompanied with a corresponding degree of pain. No great maturity in wisdom is attained without laborious intellectual exertion; no exalted moral position is reached but by arduous struggles. But, if even high intellectual rank could be secured, or a commanding moral point gained, without toil or suffering, the individual or the nation could not be fitted for the discharge of those functions which belong to that elevation, without the necessary previous discipline. The sun did not bathe the world in light until after God had kindled it in the firmament. When the Lord of the universe had chosen a people as the channel through whom the blessings of Redemption were to flow out upon our sin-blighted humanity, he separated them from the rest of mankind, and subjected them and the world to a long course of preparation for the coming of the Messiah. The servitude

of the Hebrews in Egypt was a part of that discipline. When their oppression had reached its highest degree of severity, it wrung cries of anguish from their hearts that pierced the heavens, and evoked sympathy in the Divine bosom. God was moved with pity, as from His throne He beheld the afflictions of His people. He remembered His covenant, and rose to their deliverance.

The *deliverance* of the Israelite is intimately blended with that of the Christian; without the former, the latter could never have been effected. Had the one remained or perished in Egypt, the other would have remained and perished in sin. Had the Hebrew pilgrim not gone to the earthly, no Christian pilgrim would ever have journeyed to the heavenly, Canaan. The happiness and glory that attended the progress and crowned the Israelite in the Holy Land, were symbolic of the realizations of the heir of everlasting life, and therefore necessarily associated with the scheme of Redemption. Our adorable Maker saw from all eternity that man by his disobedience would rupture that mysterious bond which joined him, with all this creation, in holy union with the Supreme Being, and therefore provided, in the person of Jesus, the link which would restore the breach and rebind this fallen race to heaven. It is, however, not my purpose to enlarge upon the divinely-projected deliverance of our two pilgrims, anterior to that period when this rescue from their bondage becomes effectual. The range of this discussion is not intended to compass the plan of Redemption in all its exalted features, though it will not be inappropriate to my purpose to indicate

some of its prominent characteristics. It has its foundation in the unfathomable depths of God's benevolence. It exhibits in an infinite degree the wisdom, love, and power of Jehovah. In this work there is a blending of all the Divine perfections. It is, emphatically, the great work of the great God.

"Redemption was no after-thought, by sin
Awakened from thy depths, celestial Love!
For, in the councils of Almighty grace,
Thy priesthood, oh! Incarnate, was designed,
Before Creation out of nothing sprang.
From everlasting was the Christ of God,
Veiled in the purpose of His love divine."

This work was gradually unfolded, and one of the stages of its development is seen in the bondage and oppression of Israel. But the deliverance of the Hebrew from Egyptian bondage offers a lively picture of the soul's deliverance from sin.

The Israelite was freed from a painful burden. The cruelty of his oppressors knew no bounds. Like all malignant passions, it grew as it was cherished in their hearts, until it became a monster that consumed the humane feelings that still struggled for existence in their bosoms. Was it not enough that they had reduced them to the abject condition of slaves? That they appropriated the life and strength of these Hebrews to their own service without the consent of the oppressed party? Not enough that thousands of hearts lay crushed and bleeding at their feet? Humanity would have said so; the instincts of nature would have made the same suggestions; but such were not the sentiments of Pharaoh and his cabinet. They will

add another wo, inflict another wound, strike a yet deadlier blow, impose a yet weightier calamity. They are commanded to destroy their male offspring. What an inhuman requisition ! what a barbarous infliction ! Alas ! what anguish did those feel from whose embrace those little innocents were torn by the ruthless executioner of the command ! It is night—a son is born—the parents bend with unutterable fondness over the infant, and, in the momentary rapture, expressions of joy escape their lips ; but these are quickly succeeded by lamentations that take wing for heaven, and put in motion the arm of Abraham's God. The deliverance of the Israelite from such a fearful calamity was a merciful and gracious one. Though yet only projected, how thrilling the joy, which the prospect of escape from this burden inspired. The deliverance of the Christian from the pressure of guilt was, however, still more gracious, and exhibits the Divine compassion in a more interesting light. For we saw, when contemplating the bondage of sin, how completely his soul was subjected to evil, and how absolute was his spiritual degradation. But the most abhorrent aspect of sin is, that it has growth as an essential element. The mind, already dark, by its blighting power grows still darker ; it debases yet more the already enslaved powers of the soul. Its course is onward and downward, gathering strength as it advances ; binding with firmer fetters, and loading with heavier burdens its willing captive. But the reproducing power of sin is its most painful characteristic. It is transmitted by the parent to the offspring. The child's nature is impregnated with all the elements of depravity, and feels

the potency of those principles which are enforced by the habits, the vices, and the examples of parents, and incorporated in the character of the child by that silent, but powerful law of assimilation, which reproduces the parent in the child. It is an appalling reflection, that persons living in the bondage of sin, and giving existence to immortal beings, become, by the transmission of their sinful tendencies and actual vices to their offspring, the authors of their damnation. "To whomsoever ye yield yourselves servants, his servants ye are." Sin is the worst of masters, a far more merciless tyrant than Pharaoh; for he commands and constrains them to doom their children to a more terrible destruction. He compels them to plunge those dear ones, not beneath the watery flood of the Nile, but into that "lake of fire," which billows with everlasting woes. Ah! the misery of an unholy parent. Impenitent friend, have you ever felt that the wickedness in which you delight may sear with the doom of the lost your precious child? The thought is fearful—it is intolerable; and the unconverted parent turns with horror from the idea, that he should guide the destiny of his beloved to unending woes. Unholy mother, to that babe in your lap, whose smiles send gleams of sunshine through your soul, and whose beauty and motion kindle unutterable joy in your heart, to that child you are imparting your character. How crushing the reflection that, through its mother's instrumentality, those little hands may one day be loaded with everlasting chains, and that countenance, now radiant with joyous innocence, be clouded with the blackness of darkness; that form of beauty, now encircled

by fond arms, be then wreathed in everlasting flames; and those innocent cooings be changed into howls of anguish, and flow in dire execrations upon your head? Hail, then, that plan of merciful deliverance which God has projected for our race, and find peace and salvation in its ample provisions! Oh! escape from that bondage which chains your immortal faculties to death. Hasten to the Saviour; He will take off that burden, He will deliver you from those cruel tyrants that have so long goaded you onward in sin. Delivered from the bondage of corruption, you will contemplate yourself and family in a far different light, and your influence will mould them into the image of God. Then, those sons and daughters will not run the perils of perdition. Then, that infant will become an angel—your children co-heirs with Christ to a kingdom imperishable and to glory immortal; then, those voices which now mingle in delightful harmonies in the music of your home, may finally blend in the lofty strains of heavenly rapture, and mingle in the melodies of Cherubim and Seraphim.

To all rightly constituted minds there must always be great force in considerations associated with the eternal well-being of their children; and, if any arguments can overcome the natural aversion to holiness, and constrain men to obey the claims of God, they are of this class. Dearer to us than life, it is at war with all the instincts of our nature to live in such a manner as to prepare for them and us a dark future. The prosperity of a child lies near the parent's heart. How sleepless the care and how laborious the toil which we bestow upon the intellectual and social cul-

ture of our offspring, so that they may possess all the adornments of refined culture and high intelligence! Much more should we display an anxious concern, followed up by unwearied efforts, to clothe them with those moral attributes which will give them a passport to the glories of the New Jerusalem. We should not in any way hinder their progress to a happy immortality, much less become chargeable with their eternal ruin. For those who unhappily neglect their own salvation, and are instrumental in keeping their children out of the kingdom of God, will pass from their present bondage to that abyss of torment where woes, wide and deep as eternity, will crush their souls with endless sorrows.

As the deliverance of the Israelite followed his appeal to God for help, so also is the deliverance of the Christian preceded by earnest cries to the great Redeemer. The pressure of painful calamities is fitted to raise the thoughts to heaven. As long as the Israelites found their bondage tolerable, they were unmindful of God. If they sought aid at any time, it was from each other, or from the idols they worshipped; but here were pressures which human sympathy could not mitigate, and woes which no created power could relieve; when, borne to the earth under the weight of their sufferings, and compelled to cast the fruit of their bodies into the Nile, their anguish found vent in cries to the God of their fathers. "And God heard their groanings, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob:" and remembering He brought deliverance.

Here we have again a lively representation of

the Christian's condition while he was yet in the bondage of sin. Careless in sin, and hardened by iniquity, he would not pray. Thoughtless and unconcerned, he heeded no warning. Sin threw a bewildering charm over his mind by its manifold fascinations, and so won his heart by its deceitful pleasures, as to render him unconscious of his danger and degradation. Dazzled by the glitter of earthly objects, and blinded by a brilliant worldly prosperity, he saw neither his own wretchedness, nor the excellency and glory of the Divine perfections. He felt as though he had no need to ask, since his blessings came unsought. He understood not that these mercies, which came streaming upon him with a singularly refreshing power, were bright messengers sent from the throne of eternal love to bring his exiled affections back to their heavenly home. Sinners will not see God, nor hear Him, in the cloudless sky. They recognise His presence in the storm that desolates their homes and hearths; they hear only when He speaks in the voice of thunder, and feel only when the mountain of their strength is rocking into a heap of ruins by the tempests of affliction. Prosperity seldom leads to repentance, neither does it often conduct nearer to heaven. It is designed to lead man back to God, and to lift his thoughts from the creature to the Father of all mercies; but he makes his prosperity a scourge to drive himself farther from the source of life. But, when sunshine fails, when His goodness is despised, He comes in the storm. He causes a man's sins to become his tormentors. His vices breed sickness and destitution. Misfortunes and afflictions are rods of

correction, wielded by the Divine hand. When he smarts under calamities which he cannot escape, he will remember God: "When they were afflicted they sought me early." "In my distress I called upon the Lord, and he inclined and heard me, and has brought me into a wealthy place." Afflictions, in one form or other, are frequently the divinely-ordained means through which the Holy Ghost convinces of sin, and so sets the transgressions before the mind, that the sinner loathes himself and cries, "Behold, I am vile." To this personal pollution there is added dreadful guilt; for he will see that his bondage and degradation were voluntary; that he has continued a willing captive of the Devil. He sees and laments his condition.

Sinful pleasures are no more relished; his cup of enjoyment is full of wormwood and gall. The remembrance of sins committed, mercies despised, and Christ rejected, will overwhelm the soul with anguish, and send fearfulness and trembling through all its channels. "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and supplication: and they shall look upon one whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born." Sin, then, becomes a terrible burden; conscience is on fire; the heart is bruised and broken; and the soul, under horrible apprehensions of wrath to come, cries to God for deliverance. The anguish of an awakened sinner is so intensely distressing, that human language is inadequate to portray

his wretchedness. It is imaged by broken bones, by painful wounds, by a broken spirit, a consuming fire: "My heart is sore pained," said one, "and the terrors of death are fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror has overwhelmed my soul." No marvel that, under the dread apprehensions of eternal anguish, David prayed: "O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore." "There is no soundness in my flesh, because of thy anger; neither is there any rest in my bones, because of my sin. For mine iniquities are gone over my head, as a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me." A realizing sense of sin then leads to sorrow for it, produces conviction of our ingratitude and guilt; and our conscious helplessness causes us to cry to God for deliverance. That cry of distress which rises from the penitent ascends to the throne of God, and He, who searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins of the children of men, will bring pardon and salvation. The prayer of the Israelite was heard, and answered in a glorious deliverance; the prayer of the once contrite, but now hopeful Christian, was answered by the great Deliverer, Jesus Christ. The deliverance of the two pilgrims, and the setting their feet in the path to happiness and glory, was the work of a merciful and compassionate Redeemer. To Him songs of gratitude and praise should ascend, all along our journey through this wilderness world, until they blend in the hosannahs of heaven, as beams of light melt away in the glory of perfect day.

CHAPTER V.

THE INSTRUMENTALITY EMPLOYED TO EXECUTE THE DELIVERANCE OF THE ISRAELITE AND THE CHRISTIAN.

THE crowning beauty of God's material universe is its diversity in unity. The same features impart to the universe of mind its most exalted excellence. In the glowing firmament "one star differeth from another star in glory," but the luminaries of heaven shine in concert—their rays, flashing from the spangled canopy, blend and mingle on their way to earth. The glory of the landscape is made up of the mingling beauties of hill and dale, of flowers and plants, of brooks and streams. Thousands of diverse objects are grouped in one of those charming pictures which nature offers to the contemplative mind. It is the flowing forth of harmonies in one thrilling stream, from thousands of harps, that constitutes the music of heaven; and it is the commingling of the deep utterances from the awful shrines of Nature, with the *Æolian* strains of the winged zephyr, together with the music of the spheres, that makes melody which pleases the ear of God. And it will be from the final blending of the triumphal songs of regenerated humanity with the hymns of cherubim and seraphim, that the recovered glory and harmony of God's moral universe shall be celebrated. All the forces which are employed by Infinite Wisdom to bring about the ultimate deliverance from all evil, act in conjunction. Minds, greatly differing in their capacities,

rise on the theatre of action all over that vast field, on which the agencies of heaven have been and are now contending against the powers of darkness, and toiling for the incoming of the latter-day of glory. Their efforts, though separated by seas, by continents, and by intervening ages, are still associated; because their influence blends in that ever-living and incessantly active moral power, applied, directed, and controlled by the great Jehovah, to subdue sin, and to clothe our world once again with the sinless glory of Jesus. Through this united efficiency of angels, of good men in the past and present, and of God, our race makes progress towards its millennial glory.

The subject of the preceding chapter was the divinely-projected deliverance of the Israelite and the Christian; let us now consider the instrumentality employed to carry it into successful execution. The history of Moses and his parents, as presented in the brief record of Exodus, is as touching as it is beautiful. He was a great and a good man. His was one of those master-intellec[t]s of the past—that contributed so very largely to the wealth of historical treasure, and, as an orb in our moral firmament, has reflected the light of the Divine perfections, as these were active in working out the deliverance of Israel and the salvation of sinners. His parents, though in humble life, have been exalted to an honorable distinction, wide-spread, and coextensive with the universe, and to an immortality made beautiful with piety.

To the eye, even of a careless observer, the narrative reveals such aspects as are fitted to excite a high degree of interest. It offers a picture of tenderness and affec-

tion in this little family of the bondsman, which is as pleasing as it is honorable to them all. When we consider the history of the infant Moses simply in its human aspects, it is deeply affecting; but when we behold the workings of a sleepless Providence, veiled under the drapery of human affection, the picture gathers upon it the sublime vesture of the purposes of Jehovah, and glows with the grandeur of that plan of mercy which fills heaven with rapture, and is now covering the earth with the glory of God. The instrumentality employed for the deliverance of the Israelite was partly divine, and partly human. Exclusively divine in its origin, but human so far as the activity of the subject was concerned in executing the purpose of God. It was a blending, or combination of human and divine agency, that wrought out the glorious deliverance from Egyptian bondage; and the same may be affirmed of the Christian's escape from the vassalage of sin.

Let us examine a little more closely the record of that transaction. Moses is born; and, when his mother saw that he was a goodly child, of exceeding comeliness, maternal affection suggested the idea of disobeying the law of the tyrant, by concealing the child. This might be ascribed exclusively to the tenderness of a mother; but, even if we give no higher origin to the determination, we must still confess that God overruled it for His glory. But there was a power behind her mental operations, conducting them to this conclusion, and that agency kindled her natural affection into burning; so that she would risk all rather than sacrifice her child. Their fears were, unquestionably, as strongly excited as their love. They knew that if

they were detected in this violation of the tyrant's command, the lives of parents and child would be forfeited. Pharaoh had officers appointed to carry into execution his barbarous decree ; these were spies, who constantly lurked about the homes of the Hebrews ; so that these parents had strong grounds for their fear of detection. Their fears might have triumphed over their love, had not the invisible power that shapes human destiny exerted a determining influence upon their minds, so that they remained firm in their purpose to conceal their infant boy.

Here, then, we see how the Spirit of God used their natural affection for the accomplishment of a scheme, whose light and glory should one day fill the universe. The place of concealment was guarded by faithful watchers ; not only was a mother's vigilance upon it, but those viewless spirits who encamp about the chosen were hovering about the little sleeper ; the eye of God and the arm of God watched and defended the unconscious babe. Months rapidly flitted by, and now that it became every day more difficult to keep the presence of this child from the knowledge of its enemies ; they were constrained by the force of that law, to whose peremptory demands we surrender the dearest object rather than life, to cast their offspring upon the care of Providence. To retain the child would have been certain death ; to expose it somewhere, it might attract the notice and excite the sympathy of those who might discover it in its abandoned state. Who can doubt that He, who had thus far controlled the purposes of their hearts, kindled even now a feeble hope in their bosoms that the infant might escape

death. That they entertained some expectation of this kind, is indicated by the preparation of the wicker basket which saved it from instant destruction. After they had deposited their treasure in that frail bark, and placed it in the water amid the flags, his sister was stationed a little distance from it, where she might observe the fate of her infant brother. They had chosen the place where some of the royal family were accustomed to bathe. This disposition made, what imagination can picture the solicitude of that mother while her child was in that perilous condition! How ardently she prayed to the God of Abraham for His interposition! It was an hour of painful suspense. What distress must have torn her bosom! what intense anguish wrung her heart! The pulsations of that throbbing heart were felt in heaven. God had a great work for Moses to accomplish—His care was over the lonely boy. He had disposed the minds of those fond parents to act as they had done—He had, also, provided one to receive the important charge. Providence had ordered the coming of Pharaoh's daughter at that hour. God had kept her mind tranquil, and her heart free from those irritating influences to which human beings are liable, and that might have caused her to remain unmoved at the sight of that spectacle of utter helplessness. Had she been subjected to disturbing influences on the way to the river, the abandoned child would not have stirred the deep fountains of her compassion. All things worked in beautiful harmony, showing that an overruling Providence had formed that web of incidents which were ultimately to evolve, as parts, in a

stupendous scheme of mercy to the human race. When this royal daughter came to the side of the river, the first object that attracted her notice was the little ark: her curiosity was excited, she had it brought to her: it was opened, and the plaintive wail of the weeping babe touched her heart. She resolves to save him—to adopt him as her son. And now, urged by her yearning for her infant brother, the sister timidly approaches, with palpitating heart, and mingles with the group. She offers her services to procure a nurse for it from the Hebrew women; the offer of her services being accepted, she flies to her mother with the joyful news. I will not attempt a description of the feelings of that mother as she is summoned to receive the adopted child of Pharaoh's daughter. I will not presume to enter the sanctuary of a mother's heart, nor venture to picture that wild tumult of rapture, as she once more presses her beautiful son to her throbbing bosom. Mothers who have hung over an expiring child, with hearts bursting with maternal yearnings—who have felt all those dreadful pangs which accompany the severance of a shoot of life from our being—may, to a limited extent, form an idea of what the mother of Moses experienced in that hour when she surrendered her son. And, if you could picture the emotions that would thrill your bosom should that pale slumberer suddenly rise, and, clasping his arms about your neck, utter the electric word, mother! then you might form a faint conception of the ecstatic joy which the restoration of her son produced: to rise to a full realization of it, you must necessarily pass through a like fiery ordeal. You would have to quail under the

dark frowns of a barbarous power; you would have to pass through the anxieties of those months, weeks and days, while in secret she folded him to her bosom—knowing that he must be given up, yet still retaining him for a day longer; and, when finally placed in the frail structure, how could she give him up? Ah! it was not a surrender to death, for then she could have seen the finger of God in the dispensation; but, to expose him to die of hunger, or to be devoured by the crocodile, and then to receive him back to her bosom, was joy ineffable!

“Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give thee wages,” said Pharaoh’s daughter. Happy mother! thy wages are already paid—thy treasure is in thine arms—thy son, thy only son, is the wealth of thy soul. Moses was left under her care until he attained a suitable age to commence those studies which his royal teachers might prescribe: a period sufficiently long to mould the character of her child. That mother planted the seeds of piety in his heart; she directed his aspirations to God, and gave such a tendency to his spiritual being in the nursery, that, when she delivered him to his foster mother, his mind was already freighted with those germs of greatness and purity, which, after ripening into their appropriate maturity, caused him to place such an estimate upon the vanishing glory of human distinctions, “that he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the children of God, than to enjoy the treasures of Egypt for a season, for he had respect unto the recompense of reward.”

It is a noble monument to her piety, and the most distinguished eulogy on the influence of that mother, that her son was not corrupted by the vices of a luxurious court. The subsequent history and writings of Moses conclusively prove, that his education was of a superior order. Egypt, at that period, was far in advance of all other nations in the cultivation of the sciences, the arts, and philosophy. Peopled by the descendants of Noah, they had retained some idea of the true God, and were also in possession of some excellent rules of morals. Their monuments still proclaim the high state of civilization to which they had risen. As a member of the royal family, and heir to the most powerful throne on earth, Moses had access to all the sources of learning, and his intellectual culture was unquestionably conducted with great care. To these advantages he brought a high order of genius. For, among all the statesmen that have been distinguished for wisdom, for purity, for ability to organize a government, and to mould out of raw materials a great and prosperous nation, none has exceeded, none has equalled Moses, in that combination of attributes which are required in a judicious leader, in an able statesman, and in a successful ruler. No intelligent and judicious critic can subject his various compositions to a rigid scrutiny, without according to them a very high degree of merit, and without the conviction that their author was a man of the most eminent abilities. The book of Genesis, in all its human aspects, constitutes a monument of intellectual greatness, whose grandeur has shone in undiminished glory through thousands of centuries. This book he composed during his exile

from the court of Egypt, amid the sublime scenes of Horeb. The book of Job was also translated, or revised by him, at the same time. The laws and institutions which he originated for Israel, together with his numerous devotional productions, stand unrivalled. What a sublime composition is the song of Moses, recorded in Deut. ch. 32! What lofty sentiments, what a holy fervor glows through all its conceptions, what beauty in its homage to Jehovah! No marvel that these sacred hymns thrilled every heart with rapture; no wonder that their harmonies have been echoed from age to age, and now vibrate in charming cadences upon our ears. But I may not enlarge on this point. Notwithstanding his prospects as the son and heir of Pharaoh, of a powerful throne, to whose occupancy he might have passed, he remembered that he was a Hebrew, and that his brethren were groaning under a painful oppression. Thoroughly imbued with the spirit of religion, and his heart glowing with the fires of true patriotism, he turned from the grandeurs of an earthly throne to Him who ruleth in Heaven, and sought the will of God concerning the course of action which he should adopt. Amid the silence of Horeb his thoughts were occupied with the redemption of his brethren. The wonder-working Providence of God was shaping events, so as to hasten the predicted return of Israel to Canaan, and also so influenced the mind of His chosen instrument, that Moses bent all the energies of his intellect to the accomplishment of this great work.

Here Christian parents may learn an instructive and encouraging lesson from the history of Moses. What

dread apprehensions concerning your children painfully agitate your minds, as you send them forth into this world, where passions clash in fearful strife—where corruptions billow, and the streams of iniquity roll with terrific violence, bearing on their bosom many hapless victims to the gulf of wo! These fears lest they should be carried away by their passions, and be overwhelmed by the vices of the world, are not without foundation; but here there is encouragement. Improve the golden hours of your infant children; in the morning of life sow diligently and plentifully the seeds of grace in their hearts; follow up your instructions with ardent prayer, looking to Jesus for help; and you will so bind their spiritual energies to the eternal throne, by the golden cords of virtue, that they will abide faithful in God's service when death has stilled your hearts. The influence of Moses' mother still lives! It thrilled through all their deliverance; lived in all their progress through the desert; it incorporated itself as an active element of their national life; and still vibrates through the four quarters of the globe in every Jew that treads the earth.

Josephus informs us that, when Moses had attained the age of forty years, he headed an expedition to Ethiopia, and subdued the city of Saba. It was after his return, if that historian is correct, that he interested himself in the condition of his brethren. Witnessing on one occasion the cruel treatment of an Hebrew by an Egyptian, Moses slew him, and, as the martyr Stephen says,—“For he supposed that his brethren would have understood how God by his hand would deliver them.” But they did not understand this interference

as an indication of deliverance, for, when he afterwards attempted to reconcile contending brethren, they turned upon him with menacing words. Moses fled into Midian, and there, amid the solitudes of Horeb, had that interview with God by the burning bush, which resulted in his call and appointment to the difficult work of conducting the Israelites from the house of bondage to the promised land. He was summoned to the leadership of the sacramental host of God, and is henceforth to be regarded as the divinely-appointed deliverer of Israel.

And now, let us detach our meditations from the means employed in behalf of the oppressed Israelite, and look at the instrumentality which God uses for the deliverance of man from sin. The manner in which Providence provides leaders to conduct Christian pilgrims to the heavenly Canaan, is frequently remarkable, if not miraculous. There is a child furnished by the Creator with rare intellectual powers; but, he has scarcely opened his eyes upon the world, before he is deprived of his parents. Perhaps he is sent to an orphan asylum; or, God has provided a home in some Christian family for this friendless one. He who controls the secret impulses of hearts, awakens sympathies for the orphan; he is piously reared, educated, called and inducted into the ministry of reconciliation, and is sent on a mission to those who are in the bondage of sin. He lifts his voice in utterances of salvation. Animated by love to the great Redeemer, and in sympathy with his oppressed brethren of the flesh, he cries—"The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto

the meek—he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound: to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord—to comfort all that mourn. To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.” Thus, with his commission drawn in heaven, and sealed by the Spirit, he sustains the same relation to the slave of sin as Moses sustained to the enslaved Israelite. Thousands of eminent servants of God have a history as remarkable for its providential aspects of their call, and preparation for the work of the ministry, as that of Moses. Men, whose early life was dark and unpromising, have been raised by Almighty power to honorable and useful positions. Where individuals may not even hope, the Lord crowns with marvellous success. I have seen, on the rocky mountain, a feeble pine plant—with scarcely a handful of earth it commenced its growth. Men said it cannot live—it must perish! But, within its delicate structure there thrilled the energy of its hidden life. It gathered strength. Its branches expanded, its roots crept along the fissures of the rock, and extended deep down into the heart of the mountain, and there drank from fresh, unfailing fountains; and, behold! it flourished, and its head touched the clouds. There it stood, battling with the storm and breasting the tempest: it taught many profitable lessons by its perpetual green, and sent its healthful aroma upon the atmosphere, while it

waved triumphantly far above the trees of the rich valley. And, after the weight and moss of centuries had gathered upon it, the noble pine fell; but it was glorious even in its fall; for its sound echoed along the mountain, and reverberated through the valleys. So have I seen the child of Providence cast upon the hard soil of this world, with no sympathy, no tears for it, and there was none to hope or to predict an auspicious future for the orphan. But God's eye was upon that child, and His care about the lonely one, and His providence directed his steps into a prosperous path. He rose to a position of influence; he was loved and respected by his fellow-men. He sent forth streams of blessing, and, having long stood upon the watch-towers of Zion, he fell with his armor on, and his fall was echoed from thousands of sympathizing hearts. How many might imitate the example of Pharaoh's daughter, and gather up the outcast orphans in human society, bestow upon them a father's and a mother's care—furnishing them means for improvement, and, having stored their intellects with wisdom, and their hearts with the graces of a lofty piety, send them forth to deliver souls from the heavy bondage of death. "Take that child and nurse it for me, and I will give thee wages"—is now uttered by Providence in many a rich man's ear. Take that orphan and train it for God, and your wages you will find at the right hand of Jesus. The wealth of eternal glory which may become the inheritance of thousands, "turned into righteousness" through the instrumentality of that orphan, whom you may fit to guide souls to a happy immortality. It will be an unspeakable reward, to have

assisted in saving the perishing; and the Redeemer will welcome you to the joys of Heaven with the glorious declaration—"Inasmuch as ye did it to the least of these, my brethren, ye did it unto me."

Has the Lord blessed you with children? Oh, then, let the example of Moses' parents influence you to consecrate your offspring to a mission of mercy. Alas! how many turn the eyes of their sons to the heights of worldly distinction, rather than lead them to Calvary; and direct their aspirations to wealth and fame, instead of instilling those sublime principles which would awaken a holy ambition to glorify God, and despise the treasures of this world, "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God." Mistaken parents, how will you one day regret that you did not teach your offspring to worship at the altar of religion, rather than at the shrine of mammon! How superior is the wisdom of those who give their children to God, and who will find in that day, when earthly treasures and honors have all been consumed, their children invested with perpetual glory. Far better that a child should suffer reproach and privation on earth, while spending his life in promoting the Divine glory by preaching the gospel, and, when his toils are ended, receive a crown of life, than to live in affluence, or amid the intoxicating pleasures of earth, and then perish forever. Moses was scorned by the worldlings of his day, the minister of religion is despised and persecuted, but, if faithful, he will have as his reward an eternity of rapturous glory.

CHAPTER VI.

THE VALUE OF THE MISSION OF MOSES AND THAT OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY, AS SEEN IN THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE CHARACTER AND DESTINY OF INDIVIDUALS AND NATIONS.

Read Exodus iii., 7-13.

MOUNTAINS have been consecrated by the footsteps of Deity, and hallowed by the felt presence of Jehovah. They were chosen as the scene for some of the most sublime transactions, in which the solemnities of eternity were blended with the realities of earth; so that, in this commingling of the divine and human, the ephemeral objects and interests of this world were endowed with a fadeless immortality. It was on Mount Moriah that Abraham was called to offer his son Isaac. Mount Sinai is distinguished for the giving of the Law, and Mount Calvary for the crucifixion of Christ, "who is the end of the Law." From the heights of Pisgah Moses was permitted to view the promised land, and on Mount Nebo God took him to himself. While Moses sojourned with his flocks amid the scenes of Horeb, the quiet of those sublime solitudes was one day broken by the voice of God, and the monotony of a shepherd's life was terminated by his call to one of the most stirring and eventful commissions ever entrusted to man. In the last chapter I endeavored to unfold the operations of a sleepless Providence,

under the veil of human affection, through which God provided the instrument of deliverance to His chosen, but oppressed creatures. In tracing out the unfolding purposes of Jehovah, we may now contemplate — *the value of the mission of Moses, and that of the Christian ministry, as developed in their influence upon the character and destiny of individuals and nations.* The mission of both is alike in origin, nature, and tendency. It is a divine — a holy mission. The call of Moses was accompanied with a supernatural appearance — an extraordinary symbol of the purity and perpetuity of the influence of his work. He saw a burning bush, flashing, apparently, with rapid combustion; it remained unconsumed; thus imaging the indestructibility and self-perpetuating power of the church into whose service he was called. Moses did not rashly assume the responsible office of leader and law-giver of the Hebrews. He instinctively shrank from the proffered distinction, and hesitated to undertake such a difficult and arduous enterprise. That want of confidence in his qualifications, so common to those of exalted endowments, before they had opportunities to become conscious of their capabilities, caused him to start back from such a perilous undertaking. There was a mighty struggle in his mind — a conflict of emotions that shook his spirit to its profoundest depths. Perfectly willing to obey God, he yet felt his inability to discharge the high functions of such an exalted mission. Far more congenial with his sensibilities would have been those quiet solitudes, only broken by the bleating flocks and the music of the winds, or reverberating when God was thundering

in his majesty. The simple, but delightful occupations of a shepherd's life, had the highest attractions for his mind. There, amid those mountains scenes, where his communion with God was aided by the wondrous structures of Almighty power—where the grandeur of the spangled firmament was a mirror of the divine glory, he experienced a holier joy, and a sublimer exaltation of feeling, than he knew in the court of Pharaoh. Not only was he reluctant to renounce his occupation, and to withdraw himself from those charming scenes, but he was also distrustful of his ability to bring about the emancipation of Israel. He knew the power of their oppressor, and the degradation of his brethren. "Power was on the side of the oppressor." The tyrant held absolute sway over the Hebrews; their patriotism was almost totally extinguished; and he had little hope that his brethren would hearken to any suggestions, or be animated by any messages, even from God, to break their shackles. The magnitude of the enterprise appalled him, and he begs to be excused. Behold how fervently and affectingly he pleads with God, that the responsibilities of the call might not be imposed on him: "And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken to thy servant; but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. And the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I, the Lord? Now, therefore, go; and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say. And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send."

(Exod. iv. 10-14.) Although so reluctant to assume the office, he was not obstinate, but yielded to the urgency of Heaven's call. This dialogue between God and Moses affords a revelation of his character, and lays open the hidden workings of his spirit. His distrust of himself for this high and holy work was the best recommendation, and conclusive proof that he was in possession of one of the requisite qualifications; for, if conscious of his inability to bring the work to a successful issue, he would cast himself upon the resources of Omnipotence, and, linked with these, he could not fail.

This painful struggle of Moses, between duty and pleasure, was prophetic of those conflicts which his successors in the holy office are called to endure. The history of an individual is often the experience of a class of men. Let us examine the conflicting emotions of one, and thereby learn the struggle through which the ambassadors of Christ pass, before they enter the ministry of reconciliation. There is a youth happy amid the rural scenes of the home of his childhood, and the companionship of kind parents and affectionate kindred. In the midst of his pleasant occupations, he becomes suddenly conscious of the presence of a mysterious power: the voice of God is heard in the inmost soul, saying, Arise! go, and preach the gospel. He regards it, perhaps, as a fugitive impression, induced by a train of serious reflections, and does not yet believe it the call Divine. But it is heard again in distincter tones—he fancies that others must hear it too. In the field, in the closet, and in the midnight hour, he hears the command—"Son, go

work in my vineyard." The conviction strengthens every day, until there is wrung from his heart the declaration—"Wo is me, if I preach not the gospel!" He scrutinises the indications of Providence, he inquires into his intellectual and moral qualifications, and, perhaps, like Moses, he desires to glorify God in some other calling. He may feel that he is not provided with those capacities which are needed to become a successful herald of the cross. He may resist the intimations of Providence, and enter some similar pursuit; but he is unhappy. His expectations are foiled, his hopes blighted, his plans fall out adversely; and conscience enforces the call of heaven, until he abandons all to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. Yet, even then, there may be a violent struggle in his mind. He beholds the poverty, self-denial, the weariness, and the persecutions which attend the faithful minister through life, and his heart sinks within him. On the other hand, paths to wealth, to honor, and to worldly distinction, are laid open before him, and his passions, and, perhaps, his friends, press him with almost irresistible urgency to enter there, and reap the laurels of earth. He may be conscious of the necessary energy and intellectual strength to carry him to those dazzling heights which exalted genius can only reach; but, on his mind there are already flashing the realities of the world to come; and, regarding these in all their infinitely momentous bearings, he exclaims—"God forbid that I should know anything, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

And now, inducted into their office, let us more particularly examine the dignity and value of the mission

of Moses, and that of the Christian ministry. As to its dignity, this office ranks far above all human vocations. I trust that I may never form a low estimate of any vocation, through whose instrumentality God is glorified and universal man benefited. I appreciate the importance of the various departments of human industry which promote the comfort of mankind. I respect the man of humble, but honest toil, and I feel a sympathy with the multitude whose energies are consecrated to those pursuits essential in the progress of civilization and social happiness. I have never been nourished upon the bread of indolence; in common with the many, I "eat bread in the sweat of my brow." And while honoring all those departments of industry ordained of God, and that contribute to the general good, I do homage to those higher spheres of activity, where great intellects are exerted in constituting and governing human society. But, after surveying the length and breadth of these intellectual labors, and following them to their farthest bounds, they are still greatly inferior in their dignity and results to the dignity and effects of the ministry of reconciliation. The statesman who forms a nation, or he who preserves one already created, is entitled to the homage of mankind; but, important as are the services of the gifted and pure statesman to the well-being of man, they do not affect human destiny to the same extent as the influence of the Christian ministry. Washington disenthralled our country, and, with his co-workers, constructed our noble institutions: their successors in the high places of our republic have so far preserved our government free; and long may this Union be per-

petuated: but, while the attempt would be impious to compute the blessings which have had their origin in these sources, what are they when compared with the blessings of the gospel? These temporal benefits are short-lived—they elevate man—make him happy, but they do not save his soul. Give the widest possible limit to the influence of good government, the power of men, and their institutions will terminate amid the wreck of the final day. But who will estimate the effects of the gospel?—who compute their duration? When the thrones of earth have crumbled to a heap of ruins; when all governments have been dissolved, and their records and monuments are forgotten; the dignity and worth of the Christian ministry, will shine in the glory of those who have been guided by its light, to “honor and immortality.” When the grandeurs of earth are shrouded in perpetual gloom, the redeemed of the Lord shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars forever and ever.”

Men may look into the history of Moses, and admire some of the acts of that distinguished man, and yet have very imperfect conceptions of the far-reaching effects of his mission. His influence is seen in the individual and national character of the Israelite, and has been one of the most potent formative elements that has been active in shaping the destiny of the race. The Israelites were in a rude state; their intellectual and moral character were of a low type. More than four centuries of grievous oppression had left their debasing blight upon them. Their servitude allowed no opportunities for self-culture, nor improvement in anything that elevates human character. Their religious know-

ledge, though not entirely extinguished, was greatly obscured by the darkness of surrounding idolatry; and, resigned to the severities of a condition they knew not how to alleviate, they had no longer a motive for self-culture. It was, therefore, out of the rawest materials that Moses was to fashion the individual and national character of the Israelite. Yet, notwithstanding the adverse obstacles which he had to encounter, in elevating the Hebrews to a national existence, he addressed himself to the discharge of his duty with amazing energy. He goes to the elders, and, through them, approaches the people. He reminds them of their noble ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. He calls to their remembrance the promises of God and the immutability of His covenant. He pictures to them the excellence of Canaan, their rightful inheritance; and contrasts a state of independence and national prosperity with their distressing bondage. He continues his efforts to awaken them to a sense of their condition and prospects. Here, you are servants; there, you shall be lords. Here, you toil, your blood and your children are sacrificed to the pleasure of your tyrant; there, you will enjoy the fruit of your labor, and you and your children shall be free. Behold, your large increase amid your oppressions is proof of Jehovah's presence with you in your affliction; and, seeing He has predicted and commanded your return to Canaan, you need but appeal for help to the arm of the Omnipotent, and He will strike off your shackles, and deliver you out of the hand of the oppressor! By such language, he kindled the hope of liberty in those crushed hearts, and the

smouldering embers of patriotism began to burn. Behold the beginning of a marvellous change! The germs of exalted purposes, and future greatness, are springing into life, in those stirrings of hope and determination which the inspiration of Moses evoked in the bosoms of his brethren. The Israelite, under God, was indebted to Moses for all he realized in the form of civil, social, and religious blessings in Palestine. The institutions which Moses gave to Israel were immeasurably superior to those systems of government then known to the world. Their social structure comprehended all those elements essential to secure the highest forms of happiness. Their political organization was humane in its provisions and requirements; equal and benevolent in its tendencies. Their religion we dare scarcely contrast with the pollutions of paganism. The moral law is an embodiment of precepts as incomparably sublime, as they are unrivalled in purity; it constitutes a beautiful exhibition of the spotless character of Israel's God. Viewed in its separate parts, or as a unit, the frame-work of their national organization has enstamped upon it the marks of infinite wisdom; while, through its entire structure, there are seen the pulsations of Divinity. Hence, that nation has exerted a more important influence on the history of the world, and determined more effectually the destiny of mankind, than any other. It was the original storehouse from which the treasures of all true historical knowledge, of the creation, of science, of morality, and just government, issued. It is the source of those streams of intellectual and moral wealth, which have gladdened and enriched the world. As all the

blessings which have come down to us from Israel may be traced to Moses, as the instrument under God, therefore, all these bespeak the value of the mission of the lawgiver and leader of Israel. His name is linked with all that is exalted in human destiny. The influences that emanated from the life of Moses are as imperishable as the race for whose benefit he toiled. The Israelite could not behold the beauties and comforts of "the land that flowed with milk and honey," without being reminded of his obligations to Moses for these goodly possessions; the green hills and the smiling valleys of Palestine, no less than the temple and sacrifices, and his hope of a home in heaven, proclaimed the value of the mission of Moses.

The influence of the illustrious leader of the Hebrews did not terminate with his life, neither was its value to be estimated by their deliverance from bondage and being conducted to a land of rest, but may be calculated in every step of their progress to power and affluence. It was visible in the enlargement of their kingdom under David; it glowed in the splendors of the reign of Solomon. Ay, through all the reverses which accompanied a change of fortune, and even in their present dispersion, the voice of Moses vibrates on the ear of the Jew in those terrible anathemas which were uttered by him as the inevitable consequences of their disobedience. In like manner do their hearts instinctively turn to the prophetic glories which the future shall yet unfurl to the repenting children of Israel, as announced by their glorious leader.

From the mission of Moses, we may now turn to that of the ambassador of Christ, and form some esti-

mate of the value of an evangelical ministry to human society. There is a tendency with many to undervalue the most precious blessings, when their procurement requires neither sacrifice nor exertion. There are multitudes who are never conscious of a grateful emotion for an invigorating atmosphere, and are totally unmindful of its importance to their comfort, until they have inhaled the fetid air of the chamber of affliction; others see no beauty or value in the sunlight until shut up in darkness. Such is not unfrequently the experience of men in their religious blessings. Men not only undervalue their Bibles, Sabbaths, and ministers, but count them a burden. The ordinances of the gospel are viewed as so many checks upon their inclinations, and as sheer annoyances to their happiness. Deluded souls! miserable mortals, whose minds are so perverted! The gospel is our greatest treasure, and the demands of the sanctuary upon our time and means are returned a thousandfold to our bosoms. It is a base libel on Christianity to speak of it as onerous, or as impoverishing those who foster its holy institutions.

The Christian minister is sometimes regarded as a useless member of the community, while his faithful ministrations contribute more largely and effectually to the temporal and spiritual prosperity of his fellow men, than any other agency associated with the advancement of human happiness. Behold what amazing effects his ministrations produce in the life of man! He is instrumental in the conversion of an immortal being, and guides his feet into that road which conducts him to an eternity of rapturous glory. And is

this a small work? An insignificant result? No; it is a vast achievement; it is a result worthy the sleepless toil of ten thousand ages. An immortal spirit, transferred from darkness to light, is a work fraught with inconceivable blessings to mankind. That mind, once active in the promotion of wickedness, and scattering a blight with its influence, is now exerting those immortal powers for the cause of virtue. Withdrawn from the kingdom of darkness, that soul is now freighted with the elements of religion and instinct with the spirit of Christ; and, therefore, its influence, which formerly smote with death everything with which it came in contact, now blesses and saves. That regenerated soul brings life to the family, salvation to children, good to the community; in a word, it becomes a fountain whence the waters of everlasting life spring and flow onward in streams of happiness parallel with eternity. Is this an insignificant accomplishment? It is wrought through the instrumentality of preaching. Should I journey a thousand years around the globe, and proclaim salvation to every creature, and would only succeed in leading one deathless spirit to the feet of Christ, my toils would be well repaid. I would rather save a soul than win a kingdom. No! it is not a small matter: the progress of an ambassador of Christ gathers about it the weighty realities of the eternal world. The Christian would spurn the treasures of the universe if offered in exchange for his hope. That soul, renewed by the Holy Ghost, may link itself with the salvation of thousands. This is the influence of the minister upon an individual soul. Yet, it is not one, but many, whose everlasting destiny

receives its complexion from the ministry of reconciliation. Apart from the actual conversions which take place under him, how valuable his services in building up and instructing disciples of Christ! to what efforts of benevolence and self-sacrificing devotion does he animate believers! It is to the institutions of religion that society is indebted for well-governed families. The order, tranquillity, purity, and uprightness of communities, are dependent upon the instructions and influence of the Church and her ministry. The influence of Christ's ministers is not confined to the sanctuary in which they toil—it pervades society. It gives confidence to the good, it establishes the wavering, reclaims the wandering, inflames the lukewarm, shames the profligate, and appals the infidel. I do not overrate the worth of a godly ministry. Look at the corruptors of human society! they send out in as many channels, as there are minds whom they incite to evil, their destructive power. And is it not a similar law that governs the mind imbued with the spirit of holiness? You cannot conceive a public interest that is not strengthened and promoted by the influence of an evangelical ministry. It breathes a beauty and harmony over the social state. The pleasures of the family, of knowledge, of power, and of wealth—all these are prized by man; but these never rise to their true dignity, nor impart their highest joys, until they are baptized by the spirit of Christ, and become redolent with the fragrance of the sanctuary. It imparts an unearthly charm to all the relations, interests, and hopes of life. It imparts a majesty and authority to civil law. It throws a

defence around our cherished interests, rears a bulwark around the altars and institutions of the land. It rears virtuous and patriotic citizens, and, by magnificent promises of reward, which it holds out to integrity and fidelity, guides men to exalted purposes, and to achievements that will perpetuate our nation's glory. The toils, prayers, and instructions of the Christian ministry, are the means by which fountains of corruption are dried up, and through which the smiles of heaven are won upon the people. We may not attempt to measure the length and breadth, the extent and power of this influence. Millions rejoice in its blessings. The multitudes of weary and worn, amid the pressures of life, come from its agitated scenes to the hallowed shrines of the sanctuary, and are soothed and fortified by the ministrations of the house of God. In whatever light we view the ministry, its value to the world is inestimable. It enriches man temporally, as well as spiritually, and makes him the inheritor of fadeless glory beyond the grave. It diminishes crime — it multiplies the good. It is the life of our nation! The pillars of government rest firmly, *only* while they repose on the Rock of ages.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RECEPTION OF THE DIVINELY-COMMISSIONED LEADERS, AND THE EFFECTS OF THEIR PROCLAMATION ON THE BONDSMEN.

Read Exodus iv. 27—31.

HAVING considered the nature and value of the mission of Moses to the Israelite, and that also of the minister of God to the Christian, let us bring under review their reception by those to whom they were sent. It is worthy of observation, that Moses did not ask Israel's confidence in his mission, nor expect them to obey his instructions, until he had convinced them by irrefragable proofs that he was set apart as their divinely-commissioned leader. When summoned of God to undertake the work of their deliverance, he expressed his apprehensions that the people would discredit his statements. "Behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken to my voice; for they will say the Lord hath not appeared unto thee." Against such a contingency, God had provided by investing him with miraculous powers. When he came to the people, he wrought those wonders which were to be Divine marks and seals to his mission. He cast his shepherd's crook upon the ground, and instantly it was transformed into a living serpent; and, taking it up, it resumed its original form. Having thrust his hand into his bosom and drawn it forth, it was white with leprosy; and, repeat-

ing the operation, it was again made whole. Having performed these signs before the people, they believed that God had sent him. Thus accredited as the divinely-appointed leader, they cordially acquiesced in the needful primary arrangements. Moses and Aaron were to request permission to go with the people three day's journey to sacrifice unto the Lord. Ignorant of the hardships shrouded by the future, and to which they would be subjected by preferring such a request to Pharaoh, their hearts leaped with gladness at the prospect of escaping from oppression. Filled with these high expectations, they returned from this interview with Moses to their homes, to discuss this project at their firesides. Old associations are revived, and, remembering the traditions of their fathers, and the predictions of Jacob and Joseph, there is rejoicing in the humble abodes of those slaves, and light gleamed through their darkly-desolate habitations. Parents recount to their children the promises of the covenant made with Abraham. With what yearning fondness did they regard their offspring, while they portrayed the excellencies of Canaan, and the blessings in reversion for them. Angels looked with interest upon that scene, and God was pleased with the cloud of grateful incense that ascended His holy hill that night from thousands of altars in the land of Goshen. They were remembered in their afflictions by the Almighty Father of humanity; and, surely He, who stretched out the heavens and reared the stupendous structure of the gorgeous universe, could as easily cause the night of their adversity to flash with the light of freedom, as He made the innumerable orbs to glow in the starry

firmament that canopied them in their bondage. Oh! what a night that was, when the rays of hope for the first time visited those crushed hearts! The morning dawns—the people go to their arduous toil with cheerful hearts, and are sustained by the prospect of deliverance from their burdens. Their joy, nourished only by anticipation, was short-lived, and their hope of freedom quenched in sorrowful gloom. There is a tendency in human nature to become so dazzled by a prospective good, or the glitter of a magnificent prize, as to lose sight of the obstacles which crowd the way to its possession. In the moment of exultation over an expected treasure, we remember not the privations, the toils, and it may be sufferings, that are to be endured as the price of the coveted boon. The Israelite had, in the first glow of his aspirations and the wild tumult of his joy, not taken into consideration the opposition which Pharaoh might offer to his wishes, and, still less, the probability that such a request might inflame the heart of his oppressor, and cause him to assume new forms of terror, instead of granting the request of Moses and the elders. Whether he had, or had not, embraced the idea of failure in his calculations, his after experience demonstrated the justness of such apprehensions when dealing with a heartless monarch. A tyrant's conscience is steeled, and his heart must be divested of sensibility and become impervious as a rock, before he can act the part of an oppressor. Moses and Aaron entered the presence of Pharaoh, saying: "Thus saith the Lord: 'Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.' " "Who is the Lord, that I should obey

his voice to let Israel go?"—was the taunting response of the haughty king, and, thrusting them out from his court, he said, "Get ye unto your burdens." Then summoning the task-masters, he said: "Behold the people are many, and you make them rest from their burdens—ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore, let them go and gather straw for themselves." To this additional labor of procuring straw, he ordered an increased task. What a monster of cruelty! What unfeeling barbarity, to press still more heavily the iron heel into crushed and bleeding hearts!

But, look at the reacting force of this request on their condition and prospects of deliverance. To the people the result was unexpected. Their already overtaxed energies recoil from this increased burden. And now they yield to another weakness of human nature, for, instead of reproaching Pharaoh, they are angry with Moses and Aaron for soliciting a respite from their labor. "The Lord look upon you," said they, "and judge, for ye have put a sword in their hand to slay us." Smarting under this fresh cruelty, they are incensed at their leaders, and, but for the interposition of the Lord, they might have fallen victims to the vengeance of the people, now exasperated beyond measure by the barbarous treatment to which they were subjected by their oppressors. For these required impossibilities, and, because they were not equal to the service demanded, they were cruelly beaten. Here, then, we have an exciting scene and a thrilling picture, in the beginning of those collisions between the leader and the people, that extend through all their history.

We compassionate the unhappy Israelite: hope had dawned—hope of freedom; how sweet, how transporting to a worn and weary slave! But his visions of bliss, like the unstable mist, dissolved in a moment. He had been lifted up on a golden summit, and for a little while his chains seemed soft, like silken bands, now that they were so soon to fall from his limbs. He had breathed freer; his pulsations were quicker; his heart bounded with a new sensation, thrillingly glorious! But he is thrust down from that golden summit into a dark abyss; his fetters now are chains of fire, eating into his soul; his heart labors under a heavy wo, and sends its painful throbbings through his entire being. Ah! why cheat him with this dream of bliss? Why have so many since that toppled down from heights that were thought to be stepping stones to emancipation from the woes of earth? The experience of the Israelite repeats itself in the captive sinner; and this opening scene is a mirror in which we may see his indignation against Moses, as a picture of the feelings of the awakened sinner against the minister of Christ.

Four thousand years make sad changes on the face of this changeful earth. Time, as it has swept onward during the revolution of this period, has evolved from the bosom of society things strange and startling. It has elevated some objects and debased others; under its weighty touch the proudest structures of man have fallen, and mingled their fragments with the dust; but, while time has modified some things, impaired or destroyed others, it has wrought no change in human nature. The violence meditated on the

plains of Goshen against Moses, their deliverer, is to-day repeated by the slave of sin towards him who is sent to preach deliverance to the captive. The minister appears before his brethren of the flesh to proclaim the plan of salvation. "Thus saith the Lord, as I live I have no pleasure in the death of the sinner, but rather that he repent and live. Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?" He is sent to preach glad tidings—to conduct those who sit in darkness into the light of God's favor—to bring them from the house of spiritual bondage into the liberty of His children. Like Moses, he does not expect them to believe his word, nor to obey his instructions, without confirmatory and incontrovertible evidence of the truthfulness of his message, and the Divine authority under which it is delivered. He appeals to the word of God as the charter under which he acts; he declares it a divinely-inspired volume, and therefore true in all its teachings. He produces the miracles, the signs and wonders, which attest its Divine origin. If there are manifestations of incredulity on the part of his audience, he invites the most rigid scrutiny to its internal evidences, all of which point to God as its author. The Bible needs no champions to prove its Heavenly origin, it is its own defender. It has enstamped upon its pages the signature of Deity, it glows with the symbols of Divinity, and flashes with the attributes of the infinite Jehovah. Its language, sentiments, and subjects, are not human, they have come from the treasures of the Infinite mind. It unveils the grandeurs of the Supreme Being, and makes known those wonderful attributes, whose creative and glorious energies are

externalized in the visible universe. It opens to our view the spirit world, portrays the beauty, the benevolence and justice of the Divine government. It is unlike the productions of man. It is the source of all true morality, of all elevated wisdom, and the basis of exalted and immortal hopes. Like the sun in mid-heaven, which shrouds with his splendor the glory of all inferior orbs, so the Bible, with its divine effulgence, obscures all books sparkling with human wisdom. He exhibits to his hearers the majesty of its thoughts, the grandeur of its themes, and the sublimity of its sentiments. Doctrines are announced by it, so exalted in purity, so consonant with the rules of equity, so accordant with the wants and woes of man, so rich in mercy, and so widespread in their benefits, that they could have emanated only from an infinite source. Its benevolence is so commanding, its exhibitions of love so unfathomable, and its purposes so worthy of God, that it reflects in all its aspects the infinite perfections of the Sovereign Ruler of the universe, so that none but the incorrigibly wicked can refrain from bowing in profound submission to its authority. Yes, the Bible is from God—it bears the impress of the Infinite mind, and has engraved upon its every page the seal of Heaven. It is a mirror, not only of the Godhead, but one that reflects all the attributes of human nature, both in its sinless glory, and in its fallen state. And should there be those, in this age of unbelief, who resist the force of the most cogent proofs of its divinity and authenticity, and demand of the preacher miraculous illustrations of the truths which he presents, before they will receive the Bible and accredit his commis-

sion, he may point them to the prophecies uttered by the law-giver of the Hebrews, now fulfilling. The dispersed children of Abraham, scattered through every clime, constitute a living miracle and an irrefragable proof of the inspiration of the Scriptures. Or, he may appeal to the columns and monuments exhumed from the ruins of Niniveh, over which thirty centuries have been sighing a funeral dirge; he may direct his attention to desolated Tyre—to the wide-spread and cheerless ruins of the once proud and glorious Babylon—to blighted and tenantless Idumea, scathed by the sword of justice, that rushed intoxicated with wrath from heaven*—and many others, as monuments on which are inscribed prophecies fulfilled, and predictions, too, that were uttered centuries before the fall of those thrones, and at a time when there was not a token of weakness, or sign of even remote subversion, but, when these kingdoms wore every mark of an affluent prosperity, and were flashing with a gorgeous glory.

The mission of the ambassador thus established, and the divinity of the Bible thoroughly vindicated, man now, like the Israelite of old, receives the minister as an accredited messenger from God. But now he begins to unfold the momentous business entrusted to his care, he presents the claims of God upon the captive sinner, the Divine right in every creature, for "all souls are mine, saith the Lord." He lays before the consideration of the hearer things which are to be believed, to be experienced, and to be practised. Guided in his instructions by the Holy Oracles of truth, he draws an accurate delineation of all that re-

* Isaiah.

lates to the great interests of man and the glory of God. He describes the deplorable condition of the impenitent sinner, as a willing, helpless, yet guilty captive of Satan. He shows his unfortunate brother the depths of that moral abyss into which sin has cast him, the loathsomeness of his iniquities, and the dark and damning guilt which clings to him, until washed by the Saviour's blood. The slave of sin assents to the truth, for he is conscious of a deep degradation; yet, urged by an invisible but potent hand, he madly presses onward to a cheerless grave. He finds in his own shattered being the counter-part of that inveterate depravity described in the Bible. It is not another that furnishes this portrait—it is his own heart, that “is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.” The Scriptures do not exaggerate his condition, he has the witness of deep degradation and misery within him. His moral state corresponds with those touching, but dark, aspects of human degeneracy, drawn by the pencil of inspiration. Man cannot ask, and could not receive any higher testimony of the truth of revelation than his own consciousness. It belongs to the highest class of evidence, and man requires no miracles to prove to him the truth of the sacred oracles. Like the Israelite, he believes, he admits the character of the ministers, and his intellect assents to the most humiliating truths of the word of God, and is therefore prepared to hear the message of the Redeemer to an enslaved world. Assured of the Divine solicitude for his salvation—that his offended Sovereign yearns with mercy towards him, and, though guilty, ignorant, and wholly lost, Jesus is made of God

unto him "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption." He feels that he may be saved without money and without price; that he need pine no longer in the bondage of sin, but may rise to freedom and to God. There is a beauty and a glory about this plan, that wins the judgment and evokes the admiration of the unhappy sinner. He acknowledges his wretchedness, and longs for deliverance. The blessedness of those whose sins are forgiven, whose iniquities are pardoned, is exceedingly desired; and peace with God, and the hope and joy of the Christian are all so sweet, so delightful, that his spirit pants for them, as the hart panteth after the water brooks. And as the messenger of Heaven describes the final triumph of the believer over death and the grave, and his passage to a blissful immortality, he exclaims with Balaam: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like unto his." As the glories of Heaven are portrayed under the imagery of inspiration, his sensibilities glow with a strange rapture, and his aspirations take wing for the home of the blest. Looking upward to that beautiful land, bathed in perpetual light and covered with the Divine glory; to that abode of pure spirits of the exalted and holy, where all things are radiant with immortal bloom, and the raptures of the redeemed swell in lofty harmonies; where all the elements of unalloyed happiness can mingle, and a tide of cloudless glory rolls over the celestial plains; he is almost persuaded to become a Christian; nay, he will arise and tread the road to freedom, to happiness, and to God. He believes himself willing to follow the captain of salvation over any road, though

swept by torrents and strewn with rocks, leading along precipices, or over burning deserts, so that it conducts to perfect rest. He loves the minister who urged him to escape from the vassalage of Satan; but he falls into the error of the Israelite, and his dream vanishes. It was the anticipated good in which he rejoiced; he remembered not that painful experiences must be endured, and that the path to glory lies through the bitter waters of repentance, over mortified lusts, crucified affections, and through much tribulation, ere he finds entrance into a glorious future. He had applied for a release from bondage, but, like others, his master is unwilling to let his slave go free. His tyrant, the Devil, is no friend to God nor to man; he refuses liberty, he oppresses the more, and, with authority he cries, "To your burdens, to your burdens." The vitiated appetites and passions are the task-masters of Satan; and, on the first appearance of an attempt to escape from the dominion of the powers of darkness, these propensities oppress and crush all his good purposes, and defeat his effort. He finds his vices fetters stronger than steel, and galling as chains of fire. To his burdens he goes, now more grievous and intolerable since he has some idea of a better state. His conscience, waked from its long slumber, lashes his soul till, like the agitated "sea, it casts up mire and dirt." Light has dawned upon his understanding, and he beholds himself enslaved, helpless, miserable. And now, instead of waging a warfare against his appetites and sins, he is angry with the minister of God. Why? Because he invaded that sensual Paradise where he had been reposing in a false security, and

disturbed his quiet. True, it was a painful bondage, but it was tolerable while no prospect of escape was presented. He had regarded his condition as a hard lot; but it seemed an inevitable, hopeless servitude, entailed upon him by others: now that he is awakened, he is conscious that this deep degradation is the work of his choice, that he forged his own chains, and placed those clogs upon his immortal faculties, and, by his indulgences so stupefied his spirit, that it rises not on the strong pinions of a living faith to the bosom of God. He would fain have peace; he is weary and worn from those perpetual accusations of a conscience steeped in guilt; he would gladly receive the crumbs from the children's table, and be thankful even for a drop from the river of life; aye, he would enjoy religion on earth and find a home in heaven; but this repentance, this self-denial, and this taking up the cross, were conditions that he imperfectly understood, when he so joyfully hearkened to the invitations of the gospel. But now his task-masters increase their burdens, and draw tighter his chains. His passions become more turbulent, his appetites more clamorous for indulgence. Thus annoyed and tormented, he cries out for anguish, and reproaches him who invited him to undertake a pilgrimage to the heavenly Canaan. Miserable soul! how many like you have gone away in wrath from their best friend! They flee from the sanctuary, shun the presence of the minister of God, load him with reproaches, while they rush into deeper crimes, and wallow in appalling pollutions, to silence conscience and to quiet their fears.

Had not the arm of the Lord interposed, that storm

of popular indignation, which gathered darkly about Moses, might have overwhelmed him with ruin, and he having perished, the Israelite would have found a grave in Egypt. In like manner, did not a sleepless Providence restrain the wicked through the instrumentality of civil and religious influences, they would go forth, burning with vengeance, and consume the promoters of the gospel, and destroy and desolate the heritage of the Lord, until not a vestige of moral excellence remained on earth. It was only through the special interposition of the God of Abraham, that His people were made willing to prepare for their departure from their humiliation; from the same exhaustless source of mercy the Spirit comes, whose operations induce the unhappy bondsmen of sin to arise and seek that narrow path which guides to the ineffable glory of heaven. It was only after a series of appalling calamities, with which God overwhelmed Egypt, that Pharoah let the people go; and only after the Holy Ghost has overturned the throne of Satan in the heart of man, that he relinquishes his hold upon the spirit. Behold the earnestness of the Lord, and the power He exerted to deliver His people! The deified river of the Egyptians flowed with blood from its source to its mouth, in the Mediterranean Sea; disease carried off their flocks; innumerable multitudes of loathsome frogs crowded their dwellings, and carried their slime upon the throne; the heavens were shrouded in wrathful clouds; terrific thunder rocked the earth; and the vivid lightning ran in streams of fire along the ground, while the canopy above was a sheeted flame; after a brief respite, an army of locusts marched over

the kingdom, and devoured every green thing that the hail and fire had spared; and, when the heart of the tyrant was still hardening itself, the angel of death, apparelled in the dark foldings of the pestilence, swept over the land, and smote the first-born, till a wail of lamentation and wo rose from that kingdom, desolated by the wrath of Jehovah: only after his empire was torn, wasted, and shaken to its centre, did Pharaoh command them to depart. This fearful scene is a picture of the terrors which agitate, and the fears that anguish, and the guilt that rends the human heart before Satan is overcome, the sinner's bonds are broken, and the kingdom of God is set up within him. The great Redeemer, when he drew that sublime picture of the signs and wonders that should usher in the day of retribution, said—"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars from heaven shall fall, and the powers of the earth shall be shaken. And when ye see all these things rejoice, for behold, your redemption draweth nigh." In this scene of grandeur he meant not only to portray the thrilling incidents of the final day, but designed to give us an image of what is realized in a more humble manner in every new-born soul, when its redemption from sin cometh in its glory. The bondage broken, the captives delivered, let us attend them on their journey to the longed-for, beautiful Canaan.

CHAPTER VIII.

PREPARATIONS FOR DEPARTURE—EATING THE PASCAL LAMB—FLIGHT, AND PASSAGE THROUGH THE RED SEA.

Read Exodus xii., 8-12.

THE birth of a nation may be sudden, or protracted. Sometimes, a single stroke of fortune may hew out a kingdom, while another may struggle through a multitude of obstacles before it will acquire form and strength. The Jewish nation was intended to subserve exalted ends in the divine economy, and always to hold an honorable rank in the history of this world. Its mission was grand, far-reaching in its influence, and glorious in its formative power in the advancement of human happiness; and, therefore, it passed through a process, in its organization, harmonizing with the grandeur of its future. Its germ, scarcely visible in the bondsmen of Goshen, yet, at this stage of their history, begins to expand. The hour of their departure from Egypt marked the period of their birth as a nation. From this period, onward, every incident in their progress towards their establishment in the promised land becomes intensely interesting.

The last scenes which we contemplated in the history of the Israelite and the Christian, were of a deeply exciting character. Groaning under the increased severities of their situation, the people were greatly enraged at Moses. He laid their complaints before

the Lord, and was commanded to return to them with assurances that He compassionated their condition, and that His purposes concerning them should be executed, and their deliverance effected. "Wherefore, say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians; and I will rid you out of their bondage; and I will redeem you with a stretched-out arm, and with great judgments. But they hearkened not to Moses, for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage." They were too sorely pressed to receive consolation from these assurances, while encompassed by those dark calamities. Words of hope seemed mockery to their lacerated hearts. The feelings of the Israelite are very strikingly illustrated in the experience of that soul which realizes its inward desolation, and feels the stings of a disquieted conscience; it cannot hearken to soothing words while anguish wrings the heart. The awakened sinner, though deeply conscious of his wretchedness, may yet be unwilling to renounce his warfare with heaven; and, ignorant of the true source of his distress, he is offended with him through whose instrumentality he has been awakened. The unsanctified heart is like a den, where torpid serpents are reposing while there is no exciting cause present; but, when the fires of divine truth breathe light and warmth upon its passions, they inflict stings that occasion the most painful sensations. Moses could not have approached the Israelite, had not the Lord thrown a sense of awe over his mind; and, in the case of the excited sinner, the operations of the Holy Ghost protect the minister from harm. But, as I have already

brought these dispositions under review, I will enter at once upon the discussion of the theme of the present chapter.

Though at first greatly incensed against their leaders, the Hebrews had such tangible proofs of the Divine presence, that they could not resist the instructions of Moses, but indicated a disposition to hearken to his suggestions. How could they be sceptical, when all Egypt was wasted and swept by the judgments of heaven, and yet the land of Goshen remained untouched! None of the plagues that smote the Egyptians cast their shadows over their dwellings. The hail and the fire did them no injury; nor locust, nor murrain, nor any other destroyer, was allowed to injure man, or beast, or herb. The Divine presence shielded their land and their habitations, and they dwelt in safety, while death and destruction overwhelmed their oppressors. And now, He who knoweth the hearts of the children of men, saw that the hour of deliverance had arrived, directed each family to take a lamb and slay it, and sprinkle their door-posts with its blood: "And they shall eat the flesh in that night roast with fire, and unleavened bread, and with bitter herbs they shall eat it." "And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and smite all the first-born, both man and beast." As the deliverance of the Israelites was the work of God, He designed this feast as the prophetic vehicle of a more gracious and mighty achievement. The Pascal lamb

was typical of the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. It was designed that the eating of the Pascal lamb should remind them not only of their painful bondage in Egypt, and their deliverance from it through His hand, but He also meant to teach them and their posterity a great spiritual lesson. They did as they were commanded. Girded, with staff in hand, shoes on his feet, and with all the insignia of a pilgrim upon his person, he forms a picture of rare interest. There was a gathering up of all his effects, and a severance of every tie that bound him to Egypt. His eye restless, his countenance glowing with intense excitement, imaging the conflicting emotions of the inner man, he stood the embodiment of high resolve, and of noble determination. The past, with all its hardships and distressing woes, was present to his mind, while the future glowed with magnificent hopes. What a stirring there was that night among the oppressed children of Abraham: aged fathers, with groups of manly sons about them; mothers, with their infants; and the younger children, full of wonder at this singular excitement and bustle of preparation. Not a soul is indifferent, all minds are burdened with earnest and intense thoughts. At a given signal they commence to eat, but while they feast with their families the night advances, and the purpose of God matures. At midnight a mighty angel, commissioned as a minister of death, unfolds his pinions, and, sweeping over the land of the Pharaohs, he shakes from his dark wing a bolt of death upon each family, and a dreadful wail of wo issues from each home. While sharp cries of distress burden the air over all the land, the min-

isters of Pharaoh rush into his presence and remonstrate with him, saying: "How long shall this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God: Knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?" The spectacles of death and wide-spread disaster fill them with such terror, that they forget the language of citizens, and speak the language of men to their king. But Pharaoh, too, is alarmed, and issues his command for the hasty departure of the Hebrews. By the first glimerings of the dawn of a new and most memorable day, the hosts of the Lord are in motion, hastening from the scenes of their humiliation. Though not yet effectually escaped from the clutches of the tyrant, still there is joy in the beginning of this movement. And now, en route for the home of their sires, and the graves of their kindred, they carry with them the remembrance of that night; and the passover which they celebrated for the first time, constitutes a perpetual memorial with Israel. It was with them, "the beginning of months." They had taken the first step in a brilliant and momentous destiny. It was the dawn of a day of glory, and the rising of the star of Jacob, to set no more forever. Hence, we find that God threw around this event a significance that should secure for it an everlasting remembrance. To this day, the scattered children of Abraham annually celebrate this momentous event. It was the commencement of their nationality, and the blessings of civilization and true religion, which now beautify and gladden this world, were in their incipient struggles in that procession of slaves. The departure of the Israelite from the servitude of

Egypt was an event which infolded in its womb, in embryo form, the present out-going glories of the gospel, and the grandeurs of that eternity of holiness, purchased by the blood of the Lamb, and bestowed upon that multitude in heaven which no man can number.

A similar importance is associated with those preparations which the bondsman of sin makes for his departure, and a like glory attends his emancipation from spiritual thralldom. With apprehensions of Christ, our passover, not clearer or more distinct than the Israelite had of the mysteries that were bound up with the Pascal lamb, his wretchedness makes him willing to obey the instructions of those who proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to accept of the glorious Redeemer as the propitiation for sin. He believes that Christ came into the world to save sinners; he has confidence in the atonement which He made for sin. This faith may be nothing more than the assent of an enlightened and convinced intellect; still, it exerts such an influence on his mind, that it sets him about the work of preparation for his flight to Christ. The outward arrangements of the Israelite were symbols of those spiritual preparations which are going forward in the mind of the awakened sinner. His soul is girded with resolution, and all his moral energies are marshalled for a severe struggle. The staff of the Israelite symbolizes those gracious promises of pardon upon which the sinner leans when he arises to go to Jesus, and also pictures the new character of *pilgrim*, which the penitent sinner assumes when he sets out for heaven. The entire

equipment of the Israelite for his pilgrimage over desert lands was adapted to his vocation; and in like manner, he who would journey to the blissful home of the redeemed, must "put on the whole armor of God, that he may stand; having his loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and his feet shod with the preparation of the gospel: and, above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith he shall be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked, and the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit — praying always — for he wrestles not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, and against the rulers of darkness." Thus panoplied, he is a spectacle to angels. And though not yet delivered, there is hope and anticipated joy in his heart, for with him it is also the beginning of months. A new era dawns, and his departure from the bondage of sin will be to him a perpetual memorial. Through all the stages of his progress towards a cloudless immortality, he recalls with gratitude the day, and the *hour*, when the Eternal Spirit kindled in his soul a desire for pardon and salvation. With mingled emotions of gratitude and praise does he contemplate that moment which decided his immortal destiny. From the threshold of the grave will he regard it with interest and joy. And, having passed into eternity, how rapturous will be his recollection of his conversion to God! and, from the most distant ages of that boundless and joyful existence, he will gaze with amazement upon the instrumentality, the mercy, and the day, that emancipated his soul from spiritual bondage; and, at each recurrence of his thoughts to that memorable

period, his harp will vibrate with loftier notes of praise.

The Lord said to the Israelite: "It shall be to you the beginning of months;" the repentance of the sinner is properly the beginning of months with him. His whole precious life has been misspent, his energies were wrongly applied. A life of sin carries with it a degree of infatuation that amounts to moral insanity. Nothing is seen in its true light; not an action is performed from right motives. He has no true perception of the value of life, nor of the objects appropriate to enlist the activity of the immortal spirit. It is written of the prodigal: "When he came to himself he said, I will arise and go to my father." The consciousness of all those who have been delivered from the bondage of corruption, bears witness, that they lived a life of infatuation while living in the flesh. The service of sin perverts the will, distorts the faculties, clouds the conscience, and debases the heart. There is no truth more obvious, than that sin produces a total derangement of the moral being. Viewing, as we are bound to do, the interests of the soul in the light of eternity, the man living in sin acts as recklessly as the maniac who rushes down a precipice, leaps into the fire, or impales himself upon a sword.

But, to return to the Israelite, we behold him hastening from the land of oppression. Rejoicing that the terrified monarch had been compelled to let them go, yet trembling, lest he should repent of his order and pursue them, they press forward towards the wilderness. And now an additional sign of Jehovah's

presence rises to their view, a pillar of cloud moves before them during the day, and, when darkness covered the land, behold it was a pillar of fire, making their way luminous! Looking upon that miraculous symbol of God's presence, their hearts were encouraged, and the vast multitude journeyed towards a point on the shores of the Red Sea, where the Lord intended to complete their deliverance by a signal overthrow of their enemies. After several day's journey, Moses was directed to encamp "before Pi-ha-hiroth, between Migdol and the sea." "And the heart of Pharaoh and that of his servants was turned against the people, and they said: Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" Forgetting the calamities that made all Egypt quail before the Lord, he summoned his captains and soldiers, to pursue the fugitives and bring them back. And when Israel saw the pursuing hosts of Pharaoh, the horsemen and chariots, they cried out, "Were there no graves in Egypt, that ye brought us out in this wilderness to die?" "And Moses said, stand still and see the salvation of God, for the Lord shall fight for you." Accustomed to abject submission, and, as slaves never dared to offer resistance, they were naturally timid, and their hearts were appalled by the approaching army. An exultant shout already rings through the ranks of the pursuing soldiery. They are sure of an easy victory; but, while coming up, behold that column of cloud rises and, moving to the rear of Israel, forms itself into a wall of darkness, and effectually shields the fugitives from the fury of their pursuers. But how were they to escape? The sea rolled its

masses of water before them; mountains on either side hedged them to the spot; while a ruthless soldiery were clamoring for their ruin in the rear. What could they do, but cry to God? The Lord heard and answered them. The rod of Moses is no sooner stretched over the sea than the waters begin to divide. The hand that formed those billows turned them aside, and made them walls on either hand, so that Israel passed over on dry ground. Impelled by a blind fury, Pharaoh and his followers enter into the same passage; and, when in the midst of it, God looked upon them and they were troubled. And "God took off their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily," and seeing that the Lord was fighting against them, they endeavored to escape by retreating; but Moses again stretched forth the rod, and the waters closed upon them, and the shout of redeemed Israel mingled with the moans of their enemies, as they sank amid the surging billows.

In this animated scene of stirring adventure on the part of the Israelite, we have a graphic portraiture of the realizations of the spirit in its flight from the bondage of sin. Fortified by solemn determination to break loose from the bondage of corruption, and relying upon the promises of aid from heaven, whose fulfilment is already pledged in the tokens of the Spirit's presence, who inclines him "to flee the wrath to come," it hastens towards refuge and salvation. But how can he escape? Like the Israelite, he is "shut up unto the faith." The sea before him—a picture of the sinner's inability to change his own heart—the mountains on either side, confine him to his helpless posi-

tion ; and the law, with its condemnations, thundering at his heels, "Cursed is he that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them ;" forbids his retreat, as the pursuing hosts of Pharaoh prevented the retreat of the Israelite. All that he can do is, to cry to heaven for help. And blessed be the Hearer of prayer, He does attend to the call of his distressed creatures ! The penitential prayer is not despised ; the cry for mercy pierces the heavens ; it touches the heart of the Almighty Saviour of sinners ; and the arm that reared the universe knocks the shackles of sin from the believing soul, clothes it in robes of righteousness, and adorns it with the beauty of holiness. The passage of the Israelite through the sea was God's work ; and the regeneration of the soul is effected through the same agency. And now, on the shores of a happy deliverance, let us join them in their song of triumph, before we attend them on their pilgrimage through the pathless desert.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SONG OF MOSES AND THE LAMB—OR, THE TRIUMPHAL SONGS OF THE ISRAELITE AND THE CHRISTIAN, ON THE SHORES OF DELIVERANCE.

Read Exodus xv, 1-22.

THE passage of Israel through the Red Sea forms one of the most glowing events on the annals of the past. Whether contemplated in its relations to other historical incidents, or, in its isolated glory, it stands out in peerless grandeur. It was a sublime transaction; a glorious miracle! so far transcending the ordinary occurrences which make up the record of history, that those must needs regard it as fabulous, who recognise not the presence of Divinity in the activities which shape the destiny of humanity. But we, who believe that the Supreme Being ordains all, directs all, and overrules all the incidents of earth to the working out of a grand problem—the recovery of an alienated race to its rightful Sovereign, and the healing of that sad breach which sin has made in the harmony of the universe—behold the pulsations of Almighty power vibrating through every transaction that is linked with the redemption of man. It was a thrilling sight, to behold the hundreds of thousands pressing into the passage which God had scooped out through that sea; and a sublime spectacle, those billows, fixed and mo-

tionless, piled up mountain high. Viewed either as it affected the Israelites or the Egyptians, it was an eventful transaction. A long train of influences, hitherto mysterious, culminated there, and burst forth in their glorious significance, illustrating the goodness and severity of God. A long and painful bondage terminated there; while the deliverance of the oppressed, and the destruction of the oppressors proclaimed, for the ears of all generations, that the justice of Heaven does not slumber for ever. It was an amazing exhibition of Divine power, and a brilliant triumph over the enemies of God. In looking back from this distant point to that stirring scene, we do not marvel that it called forth one universal burst of praise. The Israelites were hotly pursued while passing along the highway opened through the sea; and, while alternate hope and fear marked their progress—because of the rushing of horsemen and chariots, and the shouts of their pursuers — “that fiery pillar shaped itself into an eye, which sent separate dismay into each Egyptian heart, and all is felt to be lost.” But, suddenly, as the foot of the Israelite touches the shore of deliverance, a confused noise rises upon the air: he looks back, and beholds them overwhelmed by the waters and the waves, billowing with fearful violence over the haughty tyrant and his followers. Seeing the complete destruction and disastrous overthrow of their enemies, they sang the matchless song of Moses. The triumph of the Israelite images the triumph of the Christian, as he rises out of the deep waters of repentance, rejoicing in the salvation of God. While the emotions of the triumphant Israelite are admirably expressed in that song

of gratulation, it also constitutes an appropriate hymn of thanksgiving for the new-born soul. Let us analyze this song, and profit by its exalted sentiments.

“I will sing unto the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him a habitation: my fathers’ God, and I will exalt him.” “I will sing:” such is the language on the shores of deliverance. The heart that was laboring under dark and heavy burdens, when relieved, is full of melody. The bird, escaping from the snare of the fowler, fills the air with its triumphant notes as it wings its flight into the free heavens. Under whatever form of pressure man mourns, its removal will bring light and comfort. Temporal adversities may overshadow us, and spread a cheerless desolation over the mind. Like Job, every heart-treasure may be swept away by the wing of some dread calamity; every prospect blighted; and man sits down amid the ruins of his paradise, and weeps over its desolations. But the storm spends its fury; the dark chariots roll off; a clear heaven shines from above; God sends other blessings; the earth smiles again, and, behold, his heart sings for joy. But a sorer pressure crushed the Israelite to earth; the woes of four centuries are buried in the sea, and he triumphs. For, what other calamity is so crushing in its weight, so blighting in its influence, and so withering to the sensibilities of human nature, as a cruel bondage? To cower under the scowl, and to smart under the lash of heartless oppressors, is a condition, of all others, from which the soul yearns

for deliverance. And, now that the promise of God is fulfilled, they rejoice in the blissful realization of long and fondly cherished hopes. Relieved from the most terrible suspense, occasioned by the pursuit of their enemies, and from the fear of being recaptured and doomed to a worse cruelty, there was a powerful revulsion in their feelings, that finds vent in enthusiastic expressions of joy. "I will sing unto the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously."

If the Israelite had cause to rejoice, so also has the Christian, when ushered into the liberty of God's children. A genuine conversion is matter of joy to the universe. Angels herald the induction of each new-born soul into the kingdom of heaven, and rejoice over every fresh jewel which the Holy Ghost places in the crown of the great Redeemer. God rejoices over the reclaimed spirit: "For, behold, this my son was lost, and is found; he was dead, but is now alive." Regeneration produces such marvellous changes in his mind, his heart, and his relations to the spiritual universe, that, when it flashes upon his apprehension in the fulness of its glory, extatic sensations vibrate through all the fibres of his being. It could not be otherwise, for the change is so marked and blessed. Go stand by the prisoner, in his dark dungeon—let it be such an one as the French found in one of the gloomy cells near the "Bridge of Sighs"—who, for twenty years, had been wearing his fetters, and whose chains had eaten into his flesh, and vermin were creeping through his wounds; on whom no sunbeam had fallen for a score of years; who was loathsome to the sight and to the touch; ready to perish ingloriously.

Knock off those shackles ; demolish those walls ; lead him forth into the pure air ; and, what will be his emotions, as he looks out upon the green earth, and up into the beautiful heavens ? How light his limbs are ! how strangely sweet that air which sends its exhilarating ether through his lungs ! All is so new, so delightful, so rapturous, that his feelings in his altered condition are expressed by tears and shouts. Yet more marked is the work of regeneration. The converted soul was a prisoner in darkness and chains. In the pit of condemnation, loaded with disgusting fetters, not a ray beaming from the throne of heaven to cheer his darkness, pining away in a deep corruption, and sinking rapidly towards bottomless perdition, when the hand of Omnipotence took him out of "the horrible pit, and the miry clay." Such was the moral condition of all when the Anointed came "to preach liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that were bound ; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and to comfort all that mourn ; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." Such was also the picture David drew of his unhappy condition as a sinner, in the fortieth Psalm, where he portrays the difficulty and the desirableness of conversion : "I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song into my mouth, even praise unto our God ; many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in

the Lord." What a contrast between David, the sinner, and David, the saint! What a contrast between the soul when in bondage, pursued by demons and eternal death, and that gracious state when it rejoices on the shores of salvation! A gulf is between the child of heaven and the kingdom of darkness, that his enemies cannot cross. How beautiful is the spirit, robed in the immaculate righteousness of Jesus, and flashing with the holiness of God! Oh! it is a change which must be accompanied with singing and joy. When a dark, tempestuous night gathers up its curtains, and, folding its gloomy vesture, shrinks back from the presence of the sun, who comes forth from Aurora's chambers, and pours a flood of golden light over the tearful earth, what charming melodies he wakes over all the world, as his rays gleam from hill to hill, and flash upon a thousand mountain-tops, and his effulgence glows through open fields and gloomy forests! Thousands of voices hymn their welcome to the new-born day; from the field and the wood, from the valley and the mountain, there are notes of rejoicing mingling with the utterances of the deep; so that, from the buzzing of the tiny insect, up to the music of the spheres, innumerable harmonies blend in lofty anthems of praise to Him who sits enthroned above, the light and life of all. And shall not that soul, emerging from the night of sin, upon whom the Sun of righteousness is breaking with His healing beams, and clothing it with the garment of praise, be filled with melody to the God of its salvation? Aye, the very stones would cry out, were such an one

silent; for a new, an everlasting day of glory dawns; a new era has commenced; and it is fitting to proclaim, with joyful lips, the beginning of the new life, the opening of a beautiful immortality, full of glory!

The Israelite had cause to sing unto the Lord, in view of his changed prospects. Standing, with timbrel in hand, on the shores of the Red Sea, his state was hopeful, for it was the incipient stage of a glorious destiny. His feet were in the way, and his face was towards Canaan. For the same reason should the ransomed soul rejoice and sing, for he has made the transition from the kingdom of darkness into a state of grace. "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." He has entered through the strait gate, his feet are treading the narrow way, and before him stretches the path to glory, to honor and immortality. Should not he, transferred into the road to the New Jerusalem, from the cheerless path to everlasting wo, go on his pilgrimage rejoicing? Should not the redeemed spirit sing when there is joy in the church militant and triumphant, and the angels round Jehovah's throne cry, glory, for the lost is found, the dead is alive? Aye, the redemption of the soul is precious! so precious, that all other themes of praise are dismissed until all heaven sings a jubilee, while the crown of Jesus is decorated with another fadeless gem. Oh! it is meet to proclaim the Redeemer's love, when we feel its first flows of life through the channels of our immortal being! Joy is the poetry of the soul; and it will, it must flow out in its own numbers, when, through a Saviour's agony and blood, the shackles of sin are broken off. "O Lord I will praise thee;

though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me. Behold God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and song."

The Israelite sang this song unto the Lord, and why? Because He has triumphed, not Israel. An army of undisciplined slaves, just from their hard toil, had neither the strength to resist, the skill to escape, nor the power to destroy their pursuers. "I will fight for you saith the Lord." Does not the glory belong to Him who achieved this signal victory? God's providence rescued the infant Moses, His eye was upon him, His spirit moulded his mind, His power clothed the Hebrew leader with energy, He conducted him to the solitudes of Horeb, and His voice recalled him to enter upon the glorious work to bring His people from the house of their bondage. It was God that shook the throne of Pharaoh and wasted the land of Egypt, and that led forth the Hebrews with a stretched-out arm. God answered their cry at the sea, and buried their oppressors in the deep waters, and to God belonged all the glory. Hence the opening of this pæan is as characteristic for its humility as it is for the sublimity of its sentiments. "Sing unto the Lord for he has triumphed gloriously." It was all God's work; the triumph of omnipotence over the oppressors of His chosen; a conflict between the true God and idols. The broken chariots and armor, and the masses of dead, were the representatives of the vanquished idol power, and gave assurance of the final overthrow of every pagan altar, and the subversion of that empire of darkness, with its usurped dominion and arrogated

prerogatives, which He will assume and exercise whose right it is to reign.

Gratitude and humility alike suggest ascriptions of praise to the Divine being for the deliverance of the Christian from the powers of darkness. Christ is "the author and finisher of our faith." He is the efficient, meritorious cause of our salvation. Man has no resources within his structure adequate to produce a change of heart, neither can wealth or power command or impart those influences needed to transform him into the image of God. All helpless, he can only cry to Heaven, and trust to the atoning sacrifice. His prayer was: "O send out thy light and thy truth, let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles. Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy; yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God, my God." "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory." As the Israelite, so does the Christian magnify the Lord for his deliverance from death. The Lord has triumphed over his spiritual foes, He has destroyed the dominion of sin. His grace has subdued those lusts that enslaved his mind, and He bound in the strong fetters of grace his appetites and passions, and quenched the *love* of sinning. "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live, I live by faith on the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

The Israelite praised God for the destruction of his enemies. These were arrogant and powerful; cruel, and of unrelenting malignity. Such also are the spi-

ritual foes of the Christian. But why rejoice over the fall of our adversaries? Is it not harsh, and in conflict with the laws of Christianity? It is not in the spirit of gratified revenge that the good rejoice over vanquished foes; but because their acts of hostility towards man and God have been terminated; because the justice of heaven had its course. The oppressors of Israel had warred against all the instincts of their nature, violated all the dictates of humanity, and contravened the great principles of Jehovah's government; so that their destruction was fitted to promote the highest interests of the universe, and it was therefore right to shout over their grave. And surely the prostration of those sinful powers, that so long enslaved the Christian, is matter of devout gratulation with all who are capable of forming adequate conceptions of the magnitude and glory of that work, which transfers an immortal spirit from the kingdom of darkness to the empire of Christ. In that sublime description of the apostle, in Rev. chap. 15, where the seven angels are charged with the infliction of the last seven plagues that shall smite this sin-blighted world, the holy ones of God are represented in an attitude of triumphant worship. "And I saw as it were, a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God; and the song of the Lamb, saying, 'Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints! Who should not fear thee,

O Lord, and glorify thy name ? for thou only art holy : for all nations shall come and worship before thee : for thy judgments are made manifest.”

Let us examine a few other properties of this song. The Lord is my strength ; thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power : thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. And in the greatness of thine excellency, thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee : thou sendest forth thy wrath, which consumed them like stubble. And with the blast of thy nostrils, the waters were gathered together ; the floods stood upright as a heap, and the depths were concealed in the heart of the sea. The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil ; my lust shall be satisfied upon them ; I will draw my sword ; I will destroy them. Thou didst blow with thy wind ; the sea covered them ; they sank as lead in the mighty waters. Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods ? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders ? What a confession of personal weakness ! what ascription of strength and glory to God ! How loftily and beautifully does this song speak of the attributes of Jehovah ! How magnificently does it portray the exertion of Divine power ! He dashed them in pieces ; His wrath consumed them ; the sea is a plaything in the hands of the great God ; the breath of His nostrils gathered the floods, and caused them to stand up in a heap, in battle array : as an army stood those billows, waiting for another breath from Jehovah, and they cover His enemies. Yes, “who is like unto thee, O Lord,

glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?"

Here, too, may the Christian take up the grateful notes of the Israelite, and sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb. The Lord is the Christian's strength, and is become his salvation. How feeble are our best efforts if detached from God! That first desire for escape from sin, for purity, for heaven, which gleamed tremblingly over the soul, came from the eternal throne; it was strengthened in its incipient struggles, it was matured, by grace. The beginning, the progress, the completion of regeneration, are all from God. He is our strength, the author and sustainer of natural and spiritual life; our salvation. Salvation is used in the sense of deliverance in the song of Moses, and primarily referred to their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt; but was also emblematic of their emancipation from sin. While the blessings of civil freedom are worthy of being celebrated, the issues of spiritual deliverance are still more glorious. The former range within the limits of time; the latter unfold through all eternity. How appropriately may the new-born soul sing, "the Lord is become my salvation." He is the author of salvation. All those streams of life which gladden our wretched and weary humanity, have their rise in the unfathomable nature of God. He devised the plan—His Son matured it in His death. He awakens, enlightens, justifies, sanctifies, and saves the soul. Who can describe the glory of this salvation? Who shall declare the unutterable joys it inspires—the bliss which it sheds through the soul? No created intellect can measure its bounds, nor

compass its glory. Angels desire to look into it. Its blessings cheer our life; sustain us in death; raise us to heaven, and give us an eternity of rapturous glory.

Among the first things avowed in the song of the rejoicing Israelite, was, "I will prepare him a habitation." An allusion to the ark and tabernacle in the wilderness, and the temple afterwards reared upon Mount Zion. Moses was inspired, and saw in the future the results which would be evolved by the emancipation of the Hebrews; among these that gorgeous structure, erected by Solomon, and filled with devout worshippers, was most prominent. It was regarded in a peculiar sense as the habitation of God. The Christian is conscious of a like purpose, as soon as he is ushered into the light of God's favor. His body becomes the temple of the Holy Ghost; his heart, the dwelling-place of Deity. He sings—

"Welcome, welcome, dear Redeemer,
Welcome to this heart of mine,
Lord, I make a full surrender,
Every power and thought be thine;
Thine entirely,
Through eternal ages thine."

The heart, once the home of impurity, of all the malignant passions of our nature, and the abode of the devil, is now cleansed, and made the habitation of the glorious presence of the Godhead. What a blessed change! Holiness unto the Lord is now written upon all its exercises. Glorious transformation! now filled with all the fulness of God. The house of Deity, and

instinct with the life of Christ, that heart pulsates in unison with the purposes of Jehovah. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

CHAPTER X.

THE TWO PILGRIMS ON THEIR JOURNEY THROUGH THE DESERT TOWARDS THE LAND OF PROMISE.

“So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days journey into the wilderness, and found no water.”

EXODUS xv. 22.

HAVING witnessed the disastrous overthrow of their enemies, and chanted a sublime hymn of praise to God, their Deliverer, they commence their march, with singing. The amazing, but manifest interpositions of Providence in their behalf, and the destruction of Pharaoh, afforded an appropriate theme of rejoicing; while the displays of omnipotent power which shielded them from hurt, filled them with confidence in Him under whose guidance their future progress was to be directed. The glorious symbol of Deity was there, and they could not hesitate or fear. And now, the vast multitude is marshalled into proper order; the Schekina, or luminous cloud, rises into the air, and moves forward into the desert. This was the signal for marching; and, animated by the enthusiasm of their recent triumph, they felt as though all obstacles had been surmounted, and looked upon the destruction of their oppressors as a pledge for the overthrow of all who might dispute their progress, or resist them, in entering upon the possession of their rightful inheritance. Henceforth, they must conquer. With these exalted

hopes, they press forward, giving utterance to their feelings in sounds of vocal and instrumental music. What an imposing spectacle to angels! these hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children, with their flocks and effects, burning with enthusiasm, kindled by a remembrance of the past and their hopes of the future. With one voice they swell the royal sound of their triumphal song, until its mighty volume rises on the undulating air and rolls back, to mingle with the noise of the waves on the now distant shore. That their joy was great, is certain; that it was immoderate, is probable. As the unstrung bow will rebound, so human nature, when relieved of an oppressive burden, will not only react, but sometimes rise to an excessive elevation of feeling, forgetting that there may be other obstacles which must be encountered. For several days they weary not; and, if pressed by the heat and exhausted by fatigue, the recollection that they were escaping from bondage would infuse fresh courage. There is a charm in freedom, a delight in conscious liberty, that caused their feet to dance joyously along the path, over rocks and briars. Carried forward by a wave of feeling, and sustained by the force of their recent triumph, they are a happy multitude of pilgrims. But human nature is weak, and must yield to long-continued draughts upon its strength. The excitement subsides, their enthusiasm is spending, and they must soon repose upon something more substantial.

The experience of the Israelite is accurately depicted in that of the Christian; and their feelings resemble each other so strongly that they might intimately blend. The first efforts of the pilgrim in the way to heaven seem

easy and successful. The joy of conversion swallows up his weakness, and his early raptures exalt him beyond his strength. So elevating and invigorating is the influence of this change, that he loses sight of the many and painful trials to which he must be subjected; so inspiring, that it fills him with confidence and holy zeal. The current of joy flows so strong and full, that he is startled should any one venture to suggest the possibility that his ardor might cool. His soul is so full of God and glory, that he feels more like being in heaven than on earth. These are "as the days of heaven on earth." Not a cloud obscures his sky; not an obstacle crowds his way.

There are mountains and torrents which must be crossed, but they are hid from his view; or, if seen, they dwindle into molehills and rivulets, under the reflected glow of that ravishing hope which links him to the celestial Canaan. He is conscious of such a high appreciation of the excellency of the gospel, that he feels willing to make any sacrifices for its advancement. It was with unfeigned sincerity that he consecrated himself a living sacrifice unto the Lord; he will not, cannot, withhold any gift, however precious, from his Redeemer. He clearly apprehends the nature, and acknowledges the force of his obligations to the Divine government. The infinitely glorious Sovereign, as his Maker, Preserver, Redeemer and Sanctifier, has a right to his intellectual and moral faculties, to his bodily energies and his worldly treasures; and all are used in subserviency to His will. His hatred of sin, which by its powerful dominion had so effectually enthralled him in a debasing bondage, is commensurate with his

gratitude to his deliverer; and his determination is fixed to war with all his energies against the powers of darkness. All the powers of his regenerated being rise up and clamor for the immolation of remaining corruptions. He has done with sin. The monster stands unveiled before him in all his deformity; he will live and labor for his overthrow. He is ready to undertake anything for the honor of God and for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom. The Divine glory now appears to him the noblest object of pursuit that can command his powers. Amazed that he was so long a willing captive, so effectually blinded as to war against his highest interests, destroying his peace and hastening to perdition, he laments his misspent life, and is resolved to labor the more energetically for the upbuilding of the Redeemer's church. Panoplied with the armor of God, he is ready for the conflict; he goes forth with the hosts of the Lord; to make the conquest of an alienated world to its rightful Sovereign. This pious determination is nourished by his first love; every fibre of his being trembles with a holy energy, and every action glows with heavenly ardor. He is ready for encounters with the powers of darkness; he longs for the shock of battle. But he soon discovers that conversion is but the infancy of a new life, the beginning of a pilgrimage crowded with formidable obstacles. Though changed, he is not absolutely holy. Regeneration has turned his thoughts into new channels, and fixed his affections on new objects; yet is he conscious of the presence of corruptions in his heart, that are controlled with difficulty. Although born of God's spirit, he has need, daily, of fresh supplies of grace,

that he may overcome the world. An element of higher life has been imparted, and he rejoices in the energizing influence which it sends through the framework of his spiritual organization ; but, he has not yet obtained that mastery over his spirit, and that absolute control over his passions, which are necessary to unalloyed tranquillity of mind. That celestial flame, kindled in the consecrated heart, must be fed, that element of life fostered, if it is to acquire strength and mature for glory. Conversion must be succeeded by sanctification ; and this is progressive, and only complete when "this mortal puts on immortality." "The path of the just is as a shining light, which shineth more and more until the perfect day." Alas ! how many lose their first love after a few days of their pilgrimage have expired. They grow weary of the road, and, instead of a quiet progress, they find themselves in the midst of a sore warfare.

It was necessary to lead the Israelite away from the scene of his triumph to tread the desert, that he might have opportunity to exercise his confidence in God, and find occasion to learn the strength of his love for the promised inheritance. A great good had already been vouchsafed to him, which demanded profound gratitude ; and, with a still greater prospective boon, he should even be thankful for such trials as would be made tributary to his final success. It was a glorious land which he was going to possess ; it was fit that he should know whether he placed such an estimate upon its value as to reconcile him to the endurance of those hardships that separated him from it. Equally important is it for the trial of our faith, and to ascertain

the strength of our attachment to Jesus, to be conducted over desert sands or rugged roads. Temptations must be encountered, trials endured, and such a course of discipline as God ordains cheerfully acquiesced in, that we may know our own hearts. It is amid sharp conflicts and painful pressures that we sometimes learn, "that while the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak." The glow of a first love, that cheers the path of the new-born soul, may be chilled early, if not sacredly guarded and abundantly nourished by the exhaustless fountain of Divine grace.

It is to be remembered, however, that our pilgrims are just commencing their journey. The beginning of all things is attended by difficulties which are subsequently regarded as trifles. The Israelite was not yet accustomed to the fatigues of travel; he had never been on the desert, and it was with him an untried adventure, for the hardships of which his previous condition had in no way contributed to prepare him. His last days in Egypt were spent under increased burdens, the toils of which must have exhausted his strength. Add to this the extraordinary mental excitement which he must have experienced amid those terrific scenes that shook the kingdom of Pharaoh; the terror that seized him at the sea; the revulsion of his feelings when he saw his pursuers engulfed in the billows: these things must have left his body in an enfeebled state. Equally important is it to take into consideration the fact that his bondage was not fitted to produce that strength of mind so necessary to endure bodily trials. "The spirit of man will sustain his infirmities, but a wounded" (or broken) "spirit who

can bear." A resolute mind and brave heart will scorn hardships that crush those of feeble and irresolute spirits. Slaves are timid and deficient in all those properties of character requisite for great endurance. While, therefore, enjoying bodily health, they had no intellectual or moral furniture that would sustain them under severe pressures. Persons reared in bondage are moreover easily alarmed, and their fears become a greater torment, and produce greater bodily exhaustion, than the hardships to which they are exposed. With these facts before us, we can form a pretty accurate conception of the difficulties that clustered about the incipient stages of the pilgrim to the earthly Canaan. The desert, dreaded even by the experienced traveller, and presenting privations from which the stoutest heart recoils, had many terrors to the inexperienced Israelite. The hot sands stretching out before him as far as the eye could travel, and its entire aspect glowing as a heated furnace, we do not marvel that he should manifest impatience under this severe ordeal. To endure the oppressive heat even for a day was a trial of his strength. The second day dawns without a promise of relief, and, having toiled on his slow progress until the setting sun, he must have been extremely prostrated. On the third day the necessities of his nature clamor for relief, and, under the urgency of burning thirst, his fortitude is assailed, his patience is overthrown, and his discontent manifests itself in murmurs and reproaches. Poor human nature, what a wreck thou hast become through sin! With all those amazing miracles wrought for his deliverance, fresh in his recollection, he distrusted God. But we

may pronounce no harsher judgment on the Israelite for his lack of confidence in God amid that cheerless desert, than we would utter against ourselves, for the Christian is even more inexcusable for his distrust in Providence in seasons of darkness and adversity.

The pilgrim to the heavenly Canaan enters upon his journey under circumstances as unpromising as those contemplated in the character of the Israelite. His bondage in sin has in no way aided to qualify him for the difficulties of the Christian race for glory. However strong his faith, and brilliant and well-grounded his hope when he sets out, he has severe hardships. Old habits are not uprooted without pain, and the passions do not quietly submit to the yoke of the gospel. For a season he may carry out his good purposes—he is unyielding and uncompromising in his principles, and opposes an unflinching heart to the urgent solicitations of the world. But he grows weary of this rigid conformity to the gospel; and the self-denials and crosses which it imposes are ill endured by his nature. Satan, ever watchful of the first symptoms of weakness, quickly sees the signals of rebellion hung out by the passions; stirs the old corruptions and acts upon the heart, not yet deeply rooted in love, nor strongly moored by the Rock of ages; he makes inroads upon the fortitude of the believer, through the lust of the eye and pride of life. The world begins to assume its former charms; its gaiety, its frivolity and pleasures, move in the most seductive aspects around him, inviting into the flowery paths of sin. The contrast between a life of self-denial and mortification, and one of worldly pleasure, tries the stability

of a newly-born faith. The pilgrim to heaven beholds before him a narrow path, full of thorns and rocks, wounding his feet at every step; while he beholds shady retreats and flowery groves on the right and on the left, whose attractions tempt him strongly to seek a brief repose from his wearisome road. The "fiery darts of the wicked," are those thoughts of doubt and unbelief which, shot from the sure quiver of the adversary to annoy and destroy those escaped from his snares, sometimes prove effectual in the overthrow of the Christian. But if, through watchfulness and prayer, he abides in the path of duty, turning his eye from the tempting but delusive toys of earth, to fix it upon the blood-stained ensign of redemption; if his ears are deaf to siren charmers, whose melodies are perpetually wafted about him, he may yet be conscious of uttered or silent murmurs, as he toils wearily onward. He cannot ride on a wave of excitement to the shores of a happy immortality, but, when worn and feeble he must lean upon the rod of Jesse, and find support in those principles which he had chosen to regulate his life. Alas! what heart remains always and entirely free from the dark shadow of unbelief? what spirit that does not occasionally falter under the oppressive incidents of a pilgrimage to the skies? As the distance between the Israelite and the scene of his triumph increased, so was its sustaining power impaired, and, with but a feeble hope for speedy relief, he gave way to those feelings of dissatisfaction and rebellion, which afterwards bowed him down with shame and confusion of face. The pilgrim to the celestial Canaan often weeps over his impatience, and murmurs. Whatever there

may be in the circumstances around us, there is never any real cause for distrust in God. However passion, the world, and the devil, may strive to create unbelief, they may, and they ought to, meet with instant and determinate resistance. Let the pilgrim look up to the hills whence cometh our help. The heavens, glowing with innumerable orbs, declare the majesty and power of the God whom he serves; the outspread universe is full of testimonials of the goodness and faithfulness of his Creator; and all proclaim the power of the great Redeemer. And, seeing that He sustains and guides all, he rejoices that his help is in the Lord, who made the heavens and the earth. That star, glimmering far out in immensity, sends to my soul a message of Divinity, redolent with encouragement and hope. I am surrounded by the darkness which has fallen on the earth—but yonder shines that orb, all bright and glorious. And shall not He who has made that star, marked out its orbit, and who guides it in its course, also sustain and guide, amid all the storms and tempests of this sinful world, the immortal spirit that He has formed and placed in this tenement of clay? Ay, having redeemed me, “not with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of the Lamb,” He will surely conduct my willing soul from its exile to His own throne. Though now a pilgrim—poor, afflicted, tempest-tossed, wandering now over dreary deserts, then cheered by an oasis, where green pastures and living waters wake melodies of praise—I will press forward towards the mark of the prize of my high calling. When oppressed, if this timid heart should falter or turn aside to seek refresh-

ment in the world; or, if a long night of sorrow, or the severity of my adversities fill my soul with anguish, I will not, I cannot, give up my trust in Him who has died for me. While the earth on which I tread is firm, and the firmament above abides, I will rejoice in the conscious presence of my Redeemer, who guides the believing soul to that rest which remaineth to the people of God.

CHAPTER XI.

THE WATERS OF MARAH, SWEETENED BY BRANCHES
FROM A TREE, A SYMBOL OF THE FOUNTAINS OF
SOCIAL LIFE HEALED BY THE WOOD OF CALVARY.

Read Exodus xv. 23-27.

WHAT a changeful world! says one. And, what changeable beings! is uttered from the ever-variable experience of mankind. The sun rises and sets—light now covers with its gorgeous mantle the face of nature—then night wraps it in its dark shroud. The revolving earth, the waxing and waning moon, the fitful currents of the air, and the ebbing and flowing tides, image to the garnished heavens a counterpart of the silent, but majestic motions of its spheres. Man participates in this incessant change. From the feeble dawning of his infant life to the twilight of its evening, there is progression, in some direction, by his bodily and spiritual faculties. Fluctuations in his feelings, and variations in his moods, attend him through his humble or eventful career. Now, borne onward by a tide of prosperity; then, floundering amid the meshes of abject destitution. At one time, raised to heaven; then, crushed to the earth by a spirit of despondency. To-day, full of hope; to-morrow, the victim of despair. Now, shouting on the radiant summit of assurance, and glorying in the cross; then, filling with his mournful lamentation the

deep vale of humiliation through which he journeys. His path is sometimes beautiful and fragrant, because it blooms with contentment, humility, and hope ; but, it has also cheerless passages, where cold winds and a barren soil clothe it with desolation. At one time, his pilgrimage is radiant with the beauties of spring ; then, pale and wan like autumn : now, presenting a golden summer, when the fountains of his being are full and flowing, while his life abounds in fruits of righteousness ; and, again, there is all the bleakness of the winter, and the springs of joy, of sympathy, and of love, are all frozen. Such is the variableness of his feelings, and such his apparent, not actual, condition. To the eye of Him who assigns the moral discipline of man, the internal workings of the human spirit are all manifest, and destined to issue gloriously in their operations.

We have, in the progress of the Israelite to Canaan, a demonstration that these aspects of human feeling are not fanciful, but are realized, to a greater or less extent, by all classes and conditions. During our last view of him, we saw him first marching from the scene of glorious victory, calling into requisition the timbrel, and other instruments, to blend their melodies with the vocal sounds of thousands : so that the heavens resounded with the shout, "Sing unto the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously." Then, overcome by the fatigues of his journey, his heart refused to make melody unto the Lord, but uttered discordant notes of murmur and complaint. These changes in our circumstances are designed to test our faith in God. Joy in God is not the only, nor the surest, evidence of re-

generation; for, rejoicing to a happy soul is as natural as it is for a fountain to send out its streams. That "harp of a thousand strings" has been so attuned by its Maker, that when its cords are swept by sunbeams, or touched by the gentle breath of a cloudless day, or made to vibrate by the undulating waves of pleasure that roll over his sensibilities, angelic melodies will rise exultingly to Him in whom are the springs of our joy. The Israelite was then acting in accordance with his impulses; and not to have sung, would have demanded a severe struggle against his nature. But, as the gold needs the fiery ordeal to acquire its highest purity, so is the soul ennobled and beautified when its faith triumphs over the flesh. The discipline of the soul acquires intensity and efficiency from the scene where it is conducted. The desert has often been the place chosen to prepare the individual for exalted action and sublime destiny. Hagar's cries, which pierced the heavens, rose from an arid waste. Prophets, martyrs, yea, and the Son of God, were conducted into desert places, to be tried. And, in like manner, God commanded the pilgrim to Canaan to be led through winding paths in the cheerless desert, that he might gather upon his character those stern properties and those solid virtues, needed to qualify him for a residence in the promised land. Their three days' march over a bleak waste was painful; the oppressive heat from a burning sky, and the glowing sands beneath their weary feet, threw upward their acquired fervor, so that they moved as in a sea of fire.

It is not improbable that the mirage, so common in

the desert, contributed very materially to awaken a spirit of discontent, since its deceptive promises were always followed by disappointment, and of course discouragements. Travellers inform us that, as the eye wanders forward over the desert, the glowing sand in the distance presents the appearance of a lake of water, and, as they joyfully press forward to enjoy its refreshing qualities, it moves onward, not allowing them a nearer approach. May not this singular phenomenon, mocking a raging thirst, have irritated the feelings of the panting Israelite, until, provoked by this delusion, his patience was overthrown, and he murmured against God? This state of things, continued for days, awakened a spirit of rebellion, and the Israelite reproached his noble leader. Wishing himself back among the scenes of his degradation, rather than bear a few hardships, he imaged the melancholy experience of thousands, who will sink into bottomless perdition, rather than endure the fatigue incident to a journey to cloudless scenes of glory. But, at the end of three days, he does reach a fountain. There is joy in the discovery, and already regrets for their impatience and hastiness are kindling in those hearts that had murmured. Eagerly they rush forward, impelled by burning thirst; but, alas! a cruel disappointment is dipped up by the cup. He hoped to satisfy the clamors of nature, but he starts back appalled, and dashes to the earth what he had craved so long. It was bitter—either over-charged with noxious gases, or strongly impregnated with saline properties. Smarting under this fresh trouble, they cry with unutterable distress to Moses: “What shall we drink?” Moses had

recourse to God; He directs him to cut branches from a certain tree and cast them into the well, and the water should be healed. It is not necessary to suppose, with those Biblical critics who go into hysterics whenever they come into the presence of a miracle on the sacred page, that it was the sassafras, or liquorice wood; but we should regard it, as it was manifestly intended to be, simply a means, or vehicle through which the Divine power acted, to impart palatable properties to the water. It is not merely a violation of the plain narrative, but at war with reason to suppose, that the panting multitude could be held waiting until the slow process of changing the qualities of Marah by natural causes could be accomplished. The entire transaction was symbolic. It was intended to teach a great spiritual lesson; it was designed to direct other pilgrims, who, passing over this desert world, find the fountains of life bitter, to the wood of Calvary, as a remedy for this evil. The tree of the desert was a symbol of that planted on Mount Moriah, where the Holy One hung bleeding for human guilt.

And here we will leave the happy Israelite enjoying the sweetened water of Marah after the heats of the desert, to develop the experience of our other Pilgrim, who has started for the heavenly Canaan. We left him treading the wearisome desert, panting as the "hart panteth after the water brooks." The three days' journey of the Israelite afforded an instructive lesson of the opening difficulties which cluster around the path of the new-born soul. Deeply-rooted habits, evil propensities, and vitiated appetites, must all be chastened into the gospel rule of living. It is pain-

ful work; the conflicts through which he passes gradually impair his comfort, and, in the heat of conflicting principles, the streams of spiritual joy, once flowing full and gloriously, cease to gladden; then, with a fretted spirit, amid the disquietudes of that contest on whose issue hangs the wealth of eternal glory, he looks back to those carnal enjoyments, in the intoxication of which he scouted eternal life and laughed at damnation, and his foolish heart casts its longings towards the pleasures of sin. Yet, unwilling to relinquish his hope, he still keeps on, slowly progressing in the narrow way, and, with a sullen countenance, he casts an occasional look of complaint towards heaven. To obtain light and comfort he repairs to those fountains in social life where he had, prior to his altered state, drank such refreshing draughts; but, alas! for our pilgrim, these are now fountains of Marah—they are bitter because sin is there.

Regeneration implies an entire transformation of the intellectual, moral, and emotional natures of man. His views concerning the fitness of things are changed; his heart is peopled with new affections, and is conscious of new aspirations; and the tendencies of his being are reversed from the earthly, to the heavenly—from the carnal, to the spiritual. With a sanctified will, with high and holy purposes, sustained by new principles to govern his life, and with motives for action commensurate with the grand, the stupendous realities, of a coming eternity, he comes back to his family. The FAMILY—once a fountain of refreshing pleasures! The family—once the scene of affectionate endearments, of common principles and hopes, of like im-

pulses and tastes, is now changed, or, rather, *his change* disqualifies him for those enjoyments in which he once delighted. An unconverted companion, and unrenewed children, are there, and *sin* is there. The pilgrim's nature, thrilling with the elements of a new life to its profoundest depths, no longer blends with its former intimacy with that of his unholy kindred—their spiritual tendencies are in absolute and terrible conflict. There is no longer a commingling of spirits, as rays of light melt into each other; nor a merging of souls in each other, as drops which form the stream. Desires, passions, and principles, once acting in unison, are now in jarring warfare. As the brilliantly-spangled heavens, where groups of stars and planets perform their evolutions, in obedience to the impulse of one Almighty will, blend their music and their rays, while in lofty harmonies they proclaim the oneness of their origin, and shed a sweet tranquillity over the stillness of the midnight hour; just as the charm of this exquisite scene and all its beauties vanish, when the sun floods the world with his effulgence, so does that glory perish, and that grace depart from the family under the dominion of sin, when the light of eternal realities begins to dawn on that home of immortal beings. And as the repose and beauty of nature are disturbed by contending elements when the dark tempest obscures the firmament, so is that family changed into which a renewed soul returns. Not that storms of outbreathing passions darken and set ajar the elements playing within the circle of that home, but there is a discordance between the spiritual influences within that little community of warm and loving hearts. The

heavenly and the earthly, the divine and the human, are in conflict. Holiness and sin are contending for the mastery over those immortal spirits. The Christian discovers that sin has poisoned the fountain of domestic bliss. They had labored to promote each other's comfort, and unitedly exerted themselves to beautify the garden of their home, and blended their influence with the friends of humanity for the elevation of the race. But now, he beholds that they wrought in the wrong direction; their principles were defective, and their actions could not terminate in the ultimate good of souls. Having ascended the mount of moral excellence, his mind is exalted to a true perception of human misery and its only infallible remedy. That oneness of sentiment, which induced and sustained harmonious action between him and his cherished ones, is sadly impaired. Not that they have ceased to love each other; but there is no agreement between light and darkness, between Christ and Belial. The Pilgrim is going heavenward, but the members of his household are tending to a world of woe. The fountain is bitter. Having eagerly turned to the sources of former joys, not doubting that the companion of his life, and his children, though unconverted, would cheerfully adopt his views, and accompany him without hesitation on the road to heaven, he no sooner tastes the cup, but it reveals the painful fact that cast a cloud of horror over the Israelite, it contains the waters of Marah. Oh! how sorely is the new convert disappointed in his expectation, concerning the promptness with which his associates and kindred would join him in the heavenly race. There is such a beauty in

holiness, such a charm about the Saviour, that he feels that all must love Him ; forgetting that all that is beautiful, hopeful, and glorious, in spiritual communion with the Redeemer, was shrouded in darkness to His own mind, until faith revealed the matchless glory of Christ and the redeemed. Sin is in the hearts of those he loves. Its blinding power still spreads a thick veil over their own guilt, and obscures the beauty of holiness. His raptures find no echo in their hearts, and his rejoicings seem to them the ravings of madness ; so that they weep not tears of penitence, but those of regret, that he has broken loose from their associations and became a subject of the kingdom of heaven. What pangs of distress agitate his heart, when those whom he cherishes remain unaffected by those solemn considerations which lay hold on eternity ! An ungodly member of a family is an element of bitterness, in an otherwise happily constituted home. If it be a companion, loved as his own life, how agonizing the thought, that the heart that pulsates upon his bosom will one day break with the woes of damnation ; and the form enfolded in his embrace will writhe amid the circling flames of unquenchable fire ! How heart-rending the conviction, that the influence of that unregenerate companion upon those youthful immortals whom he would guide to the presence of God, is more blighting than burning streams of lava. The words, looks, and actions of a wicked parent fall upon the unfolding minds of children like mildew upon the blossom. And equally painful is the conviction, that a beloved child is yielding up its powers to the service of sin. How that thoughtless daughter,

or godless son, embitters the happiness of the Christian who gave existence to that depraved child! For, it is a tremendous responsibility to wake an immortal spirit into existence, and contribute to the formation of such a character, that the energies of his faculties may blight with death all that is morally beautiful which lies within its terrible and destructive range. The family is a fountain of exhaustless depths, sending forth from its hidden sources currents of influence upon society and the world, that will benefit or curse to the end of time. None is more sensitively alive to the eternal consequences which emanate from this source than the Christian. From the now distant prospective stages of the soul's progress amid the beatitudes and grandeurs of a sinless immortality, it will look back with gratitude to those home influences which descended upon it in early life, and nourished the seeds of eternal blessings. And, from the deepest and darkest abysses of perdition, where parents are anathematized by those children whom they destroyed through their unbelief and impiety, will they look back with horror upon that home where they sowed a harvest of indescribable tortures. For I hold it as a truth, corroborated by the testimonies of thousands, that in the home of their childhood were waked into life those *germs* which adorned their character with virtue, or darkened it by guilt.

The family is a point from which moulding influences issue; it is *there* that the harvests of eternity are sown. What question is more momentous to us than the character of our homes? Rather determine your personal condition as a parent, and that will decide what aspect

your family wears. Is that fountain still an unhealed Marah? Does sin impregnate its waters, and linger in its profound depths? Is your heart, parent of immortals, the abode of unsubdued passions, unholy tempers, and sinful desires? Has the wood of Calvary not yet imparted to that fountain its healing virtues? Are you unconverted? Then are your souls freighted with elements from hell, and impulses throb there, whose tremendous energies will draw upon you and your loved ones the weight of those crushing woes that are wide and deep as eternity. Miserable parent! wretched soul! how will you meet your God and your children in that day when the universe is in flames? How can you endure the thought of your own and your children's damnation? Does not the dreary prospect of an undone eternity appal you? Array before your mind your boasted good—your wealth untold—your honors—your preferments—and, would the aggregate joy that could flow from these for ten thousand, thousand ages, compensate for the loss of heaven? Do you not already painfully realize that your fountain is a Marah? Ah! you taste the bitter poison. Sin gives you disappointments; it brings to your home misery; embitters sickness; makes bereavements intolerable, and robes death in appalling terrors! Why not heal that fountain? why not cleanse and sweeten it by a Saviour's blood? Behold the tree of Calvary is nigh! You are commanded by God to try its efficacy. Oh! win, by your penitence, your tears, and fervent prayers, the virtue of Him who suffered upon the cross; and the family, that is like Marah, bitter in all its constitutional properties, will be healed, and waters of everlasting life

will spring up there, and flow out to gladden a weary world. Your family, sanctified, will send, through all those channels which your offspring form, rivers that will wake melodies of joy along their course on earth, and hallelujahs that will blend their vibrations with the music of heaven, while the cycles of eternity move on.

The regenerated soul will discover—as he returns to that circle of social beings of which he was a member, and where he gathered many a gem, was regaled as in a garden of roses, and drank many a cup of delicious nectar—that to him it is now also a Marah. Its enjoyments are unpalatable; they afford no delight. For, the sparkling wit of idle words, and the irreverent, if not profane jest, that sent electric thrills through his soul, now sting as an adder. Former indulgences are loathsome, and the merry laugh breaks like a shock of thunder upon his ear, because he knows that it comes from those who should mourn. That social group may not be openly vicious. Its members, though characterized by intelligence, refinement, and good taste, are yet enemies of God, and he hears a voice calling from above: “Come out from among them, and be ye separate from sinners; and I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.” The fountains in social life are all poisoned by ingredients of sin, and therefore bitter to the renewed soul. Ideas and sentiments are cherished, and acknowledged as proper there, that are abominable in the sight of God. These acquire force proportionate to their growth and age; and, though they contravene the principles of the divine government, and are in conflict with the gospel, they

are the maxims which govern their lives ; and, because sanctioned by the multitude, they are far more efficient for evil than when endorsed only by the individual. Behold the fountain of social life among us, how full of bitter ingredients ! Vicious principles are tolerated, dishonest and corrupt men are allowed to hold their rank in society. When a murderer strikes down his victim in cold blood, men of proper feelings will renounce fellowship with him. But, while society is shocked, and the community quakes from centre to circumference at such a spectacle, the licentious man, the seducer, like a foul reptile, is suffered to scatter his venom and to trail his slime in the higher walks of social life.

And thus, in all social and business departments, not under the influence of the gospel, there is found sin in some form, making its enjoyments as the waters of Marah to the renewed soul. Only when these earthly fountains have been sanctified by the virtue of Him who groaned on the wood of Calvary, will they be fitted for the Christian's use.

CHAPTER XII.

THE TWELVE WELLS OF WATER AND THE SEVENTY
PALM TREES OF ELIM, AN EMBLEM OF THE FULL
ASSURANCE OF CHRISTIAN FAITH.

Read Exodus xv. 27.

THE encampment of the Israelite at Elim is one of the most exquisitely-charming aspects of his pilgrimage. There is beauty and poetry in this picture. Hard by those fountains, underneath the shadow of those noble trees, he rejoices in the goodness of his condition, while around him is spread a desert of glowing sands. Fountains and trees belong to bards, and the palm is often seen in its graceful wavings in oriental poetry. There is no tree which combines so much of the useful, the beautiful, and the majestic, as the palm. "This," says a traveller, "is a majestic tree; sometimes rising to the height of sixty feet, trunk straight, fibrous, simple, divided by rings, which, like other endogenous or pithy plants, as grapes, form every year, as the inner sheath pushes up, crowned with its tufts of leaves and swells out to the size of last year's ring. The leaves spring from the rim of the ring, with a triangular spine or foot-stalk six to twelve feet long, having alternate narrow follicles, six to eighteen inches long, folded longitudinally, attached to each of the three surfaces of the foot-stalk. The dates rise in a

sheath, which bursts and discloses the fruit strung thickly along the curving bundle of twigs. These bunches weigh from twenty to twenty-five pounds, and constitute a graceful symbol of plenty." The Arabs affirm that it flourishes from two to three hundred years, and according to Gibbon's account they celebrate three hundred and sixty uses to which the trunk, the branches, the leaves, the juice and the fruit, are skilfully applied. In Egypt, Arabia, and Persia, the inhabitants subsist almost entirely on this fruit. Pococke and Niebuhr, both eminent travellers, speak of the many springs and palms about Elim, and describe it as a place of rare beauty. How grateful, how refreshing such a spot anywhere! How much more charming in a desert! What a scene for the pencil or the muse, to portray the pilgrim as he comes panting from the desert to recline on this oasis in the wilderness.

But there is a particular feature about this beautiful picture, worthy of notice. The twelve wells of water may be regarded as symbolic of the twelve patriarchs, and the twelve apostles; and the seventy palm trees typify the seventy elders under the ancient economy, and the seventy disciples under the new dispensation. Those patriarchs were, in a very important sense, fountains that fed the streams of the world's population, and the sources of those religious blessings by whose channels the weary pilgrims of this earth have often been refreshed. The wells of Elim, though highly important in view of their refreshing influence upon the panting Israelite, were, nevertheless, limited in their blessings as contrasted with those waters of spiritual healing and nourishment, that flowed from the

fathers in Israel over our afflicted humanity. In a still more exalted sense are the gospels and epistles, left by the twelve apostles, exhaustless fountains of consolation, instruction, and grace to the weary children of our race. For those waters of life adorn human hearts with the graces of lofty virtue, while they refresh this desert world, and cause the moral waters of earth to bud and blossom as the rose. Those streams of benevolence, now flowing through many thousand channels, which give eyes to the blind, hearing to the deaf, food to the hungry, and clothing to the naked, and wake music amid the desolations of widowed hearts, may all be traced to those springs of disinterested love that take their rise in the gospel of Jesus. And these sources will continue to send forth their healing virtues until light flashes amid the habitations of cruelty, and the knowledge of God —

“Like a sea of glory,
Spreads from pole to pole.”

The palm trees, in view of their majesty and multi-form uses, are not inappropriate emblems of the seventy elders who assisted Moses in the administration of the government in the wilderness, and of those seventy disciples who went forth through the villages and cities of Palestine, proclaiming as they went, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” “The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree.” In the peculiarity and glory of his character, as also in the comprehensiveness of his usefulness, and the grandeur of his destiny, the Christian is worthy of the honorable distinction assigned him in the economy of heaven: towering,

in his purposes, far above even those master intellects who rise not to a true perception of the eternal realities which cluster around our being, nor ascend to that elevation of purity and hope, where man is exalted to fellowship with Jehovah, and into sympathy with the intelligent universe of holy beings.

By these fountains, and underneath the wide-spreading palms, the pilgrim to Canaan reposed his weary limbs and was refreshed. There, all his hardships were forgotten, and even the remembrance of his trials was sweet. Profound sorrow stirred his soul, and penitential tears flowed freely, for his bearing towards his leader, and his distrust in Him who had divided the sea and who had formed this beautiful retreat in the desert. The gentle winds, sighing through the arched palms, blended their notes with the music of the pilgrim's praise, and together ascended God's holy hill. It was a picture of plenty—of peace; and a scene that beautifully imaged his sentiments as he sang—"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters; he restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

The peaceful and joyous state of the Israelite at Elim, affords us an admirable picture of the Christian rejoicing in the full assurance of faith. It represents—"that peace which passeth all understanding." The

joyful experience of those who exclaim: "Whom having not seen, yet believing in him, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." The Elim of the Christian pilgrim offers fountains of exhaustless grace, the trees of life yielding their fruits daily, and whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. Speaking of religion, Solomon says: "She is a tree of life to him who lays hold upon her." The spiritual traveller has abandoned the broken cisterns of earth, and has come to the fountains of living water. Here he finds the refreshings of heavenly love. This stage in the progress of the pilgrim to the heavenly Canaan is attained, and known, when he is justified by faith and adopted into the family of Jesus. He has peace with God, his hope is established, and he has an abiding assurance that God is his friend. "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom we have access by faith into this grace, wherein we stand and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ." Christian assurance, or the evidence of adoption, is a green spot in our life; a spiritual oasis in our pilgrimage to a happy immortality. It is another Eden, a Paradise regained through atoning blood. How beautiful the scene, amid whose glories Adam waked up in the consciousness of fully matured powers! He was the last on whom the creative energies of God

were exerted—the crowning work of a creation of a matchless beauty. The heavens had been stretched out; the earth was formed and ornamented; the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air had all been fashioned, and performed their appropriate offices, when the progenitor of our race rose to survey the world into which he had been so suddenly called : and, behold all was arrayed in gorgeous and sinless glory ! A garden formed for his pleasure, upon which the skill and resources of the architect of the universe were laid out ; all its objects and inhabitants were pronounced very good, because they reflected the perfections of their infinitely-glorious Maker. Exalted, however, as his emotions must have been, as he gazed upon those flowing rivers, and the peaceable and joyous animals, his sensibilities were not ravished with that unutterable rapture, that glows in the bosom of the renovated soul by its spiritual Elim. Adam listened with delightful amazement to the thrilling melodies of the unsmitten choralists of Paradise, and a tide of ecstasy rolled its blissful waves over his finely attuned spirit ; for his eye rested only upon the beautiful and the lovely ; his ear heard no discordant notes ; no sigh, no groan, no wail of wo vibrated upon the undulating air ; he was happy : yet even he, in that circle of beauty, and amid that sea of melody, could not have realized the exalted excellence of his state, as the Christian when he rejoices in the full assurance of faith. Adam had not yet lost Paradise, and knew not the joy of regaining such a priceless treasure. But, while all the sluices of grace are open, and flood the soul of the heir of heaven with delight, there is the

rapture which contrast of his former and present state cannot fail to produce. The apostle reminds the Ephesians of their cheerless state as sinners, and their hopeful condition as saints. Once out of Christ, *aliens* from the Commowearth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, without God and hope in the world. "But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace. Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets; Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord."

The inspired writers have seized upon the most interesting and suggestive objects in nature, to portray that exaltation of feeling experienced by him who rejoices in a complete reconciliation with heaven. The Elim of the Christian pilgrim is more glorious than that of the Israelite. Prophets have described the blessedness of this state in beautiful and glowing language. "For the Lord will comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places, and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found there in thanksgiving and the voice of melody." This language was prophetic of the gospel dispensation, and the realizations of those in whom Christianity should accomplish its perfect work. We are sensible of an outward and inner world, of a spiritual existence, as much more elevated in its enjoyments than the bles-

sings of natural life, as heaven is exalted above the earth. The prophet just quoted discourses in yet loftier strains, when expatiating on the glory and magnitude of reconciliation with heaven and the life of the holy, in its outgoings upon a fallen world. "His peace shall be like a river, and his righteousness as the waves of the sea." Nothing could be more magnificent, no images more glorious, of the beauty, the effects and grandeur of that moral influence, which issues from a holy heart and unites itself with those forces kept in play by the Divine Being for the regeneration of a lost world. Indeed, all the descriptions in the oracles of God, of adoption and full assurance of faith, predicate a largeness of spiritual enjoyment that not only accords with our highest conceptions of exalted joy, but rises beyond the utmost stretch of imagination. It is, therefore, perfectly obvious that the state of grace which answers to such expressions as "filled with all the fulness of God," "full of glory," "living in Christ," "He dwelleth in us, and we in Him," imply a peace so profound, and a happiness so complete, that man with his present faculties could not contain a greater measure of joy. And how could it be otherwise? At our spiritual Elim we are brought in conscious and sweet communion with God. There, there, is a blending of the finite with the infinite; a commingling of the human with the Divine; a fellowship of God with man. In this living union with the source of life and light, the believer's soul dissolves in an unearthly glory and exults triumphantly in Jesus, while his aspirations rise through the infinite wonders of Jehovah. If, therefore, his spiritual capacities are

filled to overflowing with the sublime raptures evoked by a living faith in the adorable Redeemer, and his mind receives such inflows of the realities of a blissful immortality, so that his susceptibilities can grasp no more, he enjoys a larger share of happiness than the Israelite when reposing by the wells and the palms of the desert. Who can utter the memory of Divine goodness? who describe the spiritual refreshings of Elim? A cloudless horizon flashing with a thousand precious promises, and the future as bright as it is glorious! The thunders of a violated law are hushed; the voice of conscience does not startle with denunciations of wrath; the heavens are not now robed in darkness, nor gleaming with devouring flames. Christ has died; his blood has cleansed me from all sin; conscience whispers in "a still small voice," that all is well! O, my God, what can I want when I have thee as my portion! Thou art the fulness of all things, and thou fillest my soul. What can I dread since thy wrath is turned away? if thou art for me who can be against me? My Father, thy smile is better than rubies, more precious than gold, yea, than much fine gold! The light of thy reconciled countenance is more glorious to me than the lustre of ten thousand suns. What can I fear in the present, or anticipate in the future, while thou art my guide and my strength? Thine arm has reared the universe, and robed it with glory; that arm is my support; that arm will raise me to heaven. Ye who bow at other shrines find neither rest nor peace, but carry your wants away; your aching hearts find no repose, your longing spirits are not satisfied; but here I find all, all I need. Here, at

my Elim, I have fountains of salvation, fresh, full, exhaustless! All around me, and over this desert world, I behold men panting and dying, while the music of the flowing river of life wafts the message upon every wind — “Ho every one that is athirst! Come ye to the waters of life.” Oh! my soul, here do thou abide. Suffer not the allurements of the world to draw thee hence, “for it is good to be here.” These are foretastes of heavenly bliss; here thou mayest gather strength to bear thee over the desert; here thou canst nerve and plume thyself for thy flight to the bosom of God. Blessed, holy place, where all doubts melt away and vanish before the brightness of the Sun of righteousness, whose healing beams clothe me in a vesture of spotless purity. Here, at my spiritual Elim, I will rejoice in His shadow, and delight myself with His fruit; and when commanded to go forward, I will sing, as I arise to follow the pillar of fire —

“Guide me O, thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty,
Hold me by thy powerful hand.
Bread of heaven
Feed me till I want no more.”

Apart from those internal sources of rapture which the new life opens in the believing soul, the glory of the inner man invests all the external world with splendor. The material world is clothed in a new aspect. The heavens shine with a more gorgeous beauty. Formerly, he returned from the contemplation of the span-gled firmament with such lessons as the undevout

astronomer learns; now every star sends a message of divinity to his soul, and voices from the shrines of Nature proclaim the power and glory of Jehovah. That vast immensity, in which he saw only orbs of light revolving in beautiful harmony, he now beholds filled with the controlling energy of the infinite Sovereign. To him the winged winds are messengers of God; and, as he beholds the clouds freighted by Almighty power with treasures for the forest and the field, and all things working together for the general good, he admires, as he never did before, the excellency of that wondrous organism that thrills with the pulsations of Divinity. The earth is full of His riches. The goodness of God flashes in every star, glows in every sunbeam, is pencilled in every flower, murmured by every rivulet; and all Nature, in one grand anthem, joins his renovated and happy spirit in singing, "God is love." Thus, while all objects are possessed of new aspects, they also become new sources of pleasure to the sanctified mind. The Christian pilgrim now learns lessons of wisdom from the most insignificant object, by discovering its appropriate end and functions. The pebble and the mountain alike testify of the oneness and the power of their Maker. The dew drop, which is a little world of great mysteries, and the ocean have the same author; the planet that rolls in silent majesty through space acknowledges the dominion of the same law that moulds the tear which trickles from the cheek of sorrow. The humble grasses of the field, and the lofty cedars of the mountain, the flowers that adorn this earth, and those that bloom in the canopy above, are his instructors.

From the buzzing insect to the music of the spheres, there are thousands of harmonies sweetly blending with those melodies made in his heart to the Lord. All objects give forth utterances of praise; all bow in adoration before God. The whirling earth flashes with His glory, and the universe glows with the grandeur of its God. Thus every object becomes a source of joy, or a palm bearing precious fruit.

If we pass to a consideration of those properties which make up the life of the Christian pilgrim, we shall discover a similar state of blessedness. Here, also, do the fountains and trees of Elim promote his comfort. The picture of the happy Israelite is realized by the traveller to the heavenly Canaan. We have seen how his family, which was once a Marah, has been sweetened by the wood of Calvary, and, now sanctified, it yields him the peaceable fruits of righteousness. His children are brought under religious culture; God is acknowledged; the Saviour is loved; the Holy Spirit is cherished; and "there is rejoicing in the habitation of the righteous." The altar of supplication and thanksgiving is reared; the incense of prayer ascends in clouds to God's holy hill; the dews of renewing grace are distilling upon that home; and heirs of a fadeless immortality are springing up as willows along the water-courses. The family is consecrated to the Lord; holiness is inscribed upon all their actions. Christiana and her children have set out with the once lonely pilgrim, and all are now journeying towards the New Jerusalem. Here, then, is indeed the Christian's Elim; here, like the weary Israelite, does he find fountains and palms in the

desert : by these fountains, and underneath the shadow of the Almighty wings, he has joys with which a stranger intermeddleth not. Only parents who have wrestled with God, and felt the anguish and throes of the new birth, know what joy the assurance brings, that those candidates for immortality to whom they have given existence, are, with us, treading the road to glory. The full assurance of faith, when all things are submitted and given to God, and He has given himself to us, is the oasis in our desert life ; the Elim, whose streams, and fruits, and grateful reminiscences, will breathe their animating influence upon the soul through all its progress to eternal life, will live in our memory when in the Paradise above, and never lose its beauty amid the eternal raptures of the redeemed.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CONFLICT OF NATURE AND FAITH; OR, TRIALS OF THE DESERT.

Read Exodus xvi. 1-4.

THE last stage contemplated in the progress of the two Pilgrims, was their encampment at Elim. It was a scene of enchanting beauty and a place of refreshing, clothed with an outward tranquillity, that mirrored the quiet and abundance of peace realized by the Christian when rejoicing in the full assurance of faith. The path of life, though often rugged, and swept by tempests, has its green spots, where, according to human apprehension, it would be delightful to linger long and fondly. Those weary travellers in the desert found the wells and palms of Elim exceedingly grateful to their worn spirits. How long they were permitted to enjoy these pleasant scenes we are not informed; but, doubtless, long enough to be thoroughly recruited and strengthened for the march which was before them. In the pilgrimage to heaven Providence has ordered many pleasant experiences. These make the hardships of life endurable, and inspire the hope of richer blessings when the journey terminates. With what intense pleasure does the mind throw itself back upon the memories and joys of childhood — to that period when the fountains of our being were fresh and flowing, and we had not yet advanced beyond the

charmed circle of childish innocence and delight. We heard then only the music of life's ocean, and were not yet tossed and affrighted by those waves which storms of affliction have since caused to billow in fearful violence around us. Blessed, joyous season! would that it had terminated in the beauty and bloom of a fadeless immortality! Oh! how those familiar and venerable images of parents rise up before the mind. The judicious counsels of a father still glow upon the pages of memory, and the affectionate caresses of that fond, but sainted mother, yet thrill with a ravishing ecstasy along the chords of our spiritual framework. Alas! that it was not our privilege always to remain children, and to leave the woes of life untasted. Alas! that that Eden, so beautiful and blooming, was ever blighted. But here we have no continuing city; we are pilgrims and strangers, as our fathers were. As pilgrims journeying to a better home, those parents must lead the way. Yet is it a mournful spectacle to witness the sundering of a circle of fond hearts. Is it not still more painful to feel it all? Yes, all! Even the destroyer may sometimes falter in his mission, and hesitate before he strikes the fatal blow. Behold that family scene, where no mildew has yet fallen on a single blossom, where the fountains of family enjoyment are untroubled, where voices tremulous with age, and infantile notes, blend in angelic harmonies; all is so peaceful and beautiful that even death pauses, half-regretful, before he enters! The gloomy messenger hovers around the charming abode until the melodies of evening praise have died away, and the voice of supplication is hushed; then, softly

he approaches that infant, and gently unlooses the silver cord, and breaks the golden bowl, and waiting angels conduct the ransomed spirit home. In another place his work may be with the heads of the household, and a band of helpless ones may raise imploring looks to heaven, but in vain; for they must be led forth from their Elim, to tread the scorching desert. The parents are taken, and those children, so young, so helpless, are deprived of the strong arm that sustained them, and of that tender bosom where all their sorrows could be treasured. Henceforth they are alone; but, not alone, for God is the father of the fatherless. They are His; and while His infallible wisdom ordained that bereavement, and now guides these orphans through the desert, their loved departed are to them guiding stars to glory. There are also scenes where friendships blend, and where the fragrance of human love mingles with all our associations, and there we experience that perfection of human bliss that can admit of no increase, and we could wish that this might be permanent. But these are the Elims where we can tarry but for a little while, that we may gather energy for the prosecution of our journey, and to afford us foretastes of that blissful immortality beyond the grave.

The Elim of the Israelite, as heretofore intimated, was especially designed to image that happy experience of the Christian, when he moves and rejoices on the higher elevations of the spiritual mount. On such occasions, when there is a special consecration to God, and very sensible manifestations of the Divine presence, when, encompassing the altar of God, we commemorate

the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus, it is then, that, with joy, we draw water out of the wells of salvation. How long and fondly is the first approach to the Lord's table remembered by the new-born soul! How the savor of those holy solemnities lingers about the heart! how refreshed and cheered is the soul after drinking for the first time from the wells of life! To the humble penitent, and to the weary pilgrim, it is a spiritual Elim. It was at such a season that I heard a poor weather-beaten, tempest-tossed expectant of heaven, breathe this enthusiastic prayer — "Oh! my God, let me feel thus to all eternity; let such raptures forever abide in my soul." Oh! there are seasons when all the obstructions between the soul and its God are removed, when the mountains flow down; and everything about us is bathed in glory. The disciples on the mount of transfiguration experienced such rapturous inflows from the joys above, that their conceptions of heaven were fully met. They said — "Lord, it is good to be here; let us build three tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias;" not knowing that tarrying there would not be for their good nor their master's glory. Ye men of God must come down from that mount of glory, to walk o'er rugged paths, and to tread the vales of sorrow, to win the imperishable crowns of martyrdom.

The Israelite departed from Elim to try again the desert. He is led back so as to gain another view of the sea, that he might be reminded of the wonders that signalized his deliverance from his enemies. The Christian pilgrim cannot always remain amid gracious privileges; yet, a kind Providence has given us such a

mental structure that we can recur, at every stage of our progress, to all the stirring scenes that cluster about the past, and linger in thought about those refreshing seasons, the memory of which will animate us under the pressures of sickness, distress, or doubt. When the Israelites had come into the wilderness of Sin, they were again sorely tried. Before, they thirsted; now, they are pressed with hunger. It may be readily imagined, that such a multitude would soon exhaust the stores that they had carried with them from Egypt; and, passing through a vast desert, they would naturally be apprehensive that they would not be able to procure adequate supplies. They may have encouraged themselves with the hope of reaching another place like their encampment at Elim. But, disappointed in their expectations, their hearts were discouraged; for, while their hopes vanished, their natures clamored for meat and drink, until the flesh gained another conquest over their faith. They remembered the leeks and onions—their gross, but plentiful, diet in the land of bondage—and their hearts lusted for the flesh-pots of Egypt, and murmured against Moses and Aaron: “Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord, when we sat by the flesh-pots of Egypt, and when we did eat bread to the full! for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.” Here, then, we have a painful conflict between nature and faith. Notwithstanding their path, from the moment of their flight to that hour, glowed with stupendous wonders and was marked by unmerited goodness, they are distrustful and ungrateful; they regret their de-

parture from Egypt, and demand, in no very respectful language, food to eat and water to drink. Though God could have ordered Moses to call up fountains, or to command the clouds to pour out their treasures, the Israelite needed faith. His experience was not deep, and, as soon as he lost sight of the fountains and palms, his faith failed him, for he walked by sight, not by faith. He dreaded starvation. What a singular character! you say. What strange ingratitude and faithlessness have we in the murmuring Israelite! How weak to complain so soon, and so loud! What infatuation, to wish himself back into the horrors of bondage and shame! Was it not better to bear a thousand hardships, so that they conducted to a happy issue, rather than groan away his life in ignoble servitude? Was it not even more desirable to perish in want on the dreary desert, than be the abject slave of a despot? The sentiment, "Give me liberty, or give me death!" was not then stirring in those desponding hearts. Let our censure be seasoned with moderation, and let us take heed that we do not involve ourselves in a heavier condemnation than that which fell upon them. His stupidity and hardness of heart are proverbial among more favored generations; yet, stiff-necked and of a rebellious spirit, the Israelite did not exhaust these unenviable properties of character. True, it is difficult to realize the possibility of such a temper of mind as he exhibited on different occasions; and still harder to conceive how the wonders of their deliverance, the triumph at the sea, the glorious provision of Elim, and, above all, with the Shechinah right before his eyes — that all these, and this symbol of the Divine presence

should not have kept him from rebelling against the Lord. His memory seemed like the sandy beach, that loses as fast as it receives its impressions.

And now let us dismiss the Israelite, and turn to the experience of the Christian. Does he not find, when narrowly contemplating his moral exercises, a counterpart in these to the picture which the pilgrim of the desert offers to his view? How soon does he forget deliverances, mercies and vows! The same contradictions are now at war in man which agitated human nature at that distant period. The wasting whirl of centuries has wrought changes in the aspect of kingdoms, and transformed the rock-bound shore; but time has not altered the composition of the human heart. It is still "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." It has yet unfathomable depths of corruption. The more we explore its hidden chambers, the more occasion we discover for humility, because we are partakers of such an inheritance. The more thoroughly we become acquainted with its secret springs of action, the greater is our amazement at the tremendous disorders of our being. Such is the derangement of our moral faculties, that even after the regenerating grace of the Spirit has passed upon us, we come short of absolute conformity to the Divine will in all the actions and impulses of our being. The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and sometimes gains a temporary mastery. Passion sometimes sweeps in desolating storms over the heart, and blights the springing plants of grace. The apostle Paul, a man of exalted intellect and rare piety, was conscious of the most painful struggles. "For I know that in me (that is in my

flesh) there dwelleth no good thing : for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would, I do not ; but the evil which I would not, that I do. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man. But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. Oh ! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death ?" Here, then, we have graphically delineated the internal commotion in the believer, aye, in an apostle ! And if this chosen vessel of the Lord breaks out in such touching utterances, how much more difficult is this warfare in those of a feeble faith ? Who is not conscious of the presence of this terrible power within us ? But let us enter more fully into the experience of the Christian pilgrim.

He has obtained the full assurance of faith. He now goes forward in the path of Christian duty. The road is narrow, and he advances with difficulty. His nature, only partially sanctified, clamors for the sinful indulgences renounced. He strives to keep his body under the dominion of grace. He labors and prays ; and, for a season, meets every appeal for indulgence with such an inflexible will, that he remains firm, and rejoices in victory. But, Satan is not easily discomfited. He renews his assaults, again and again. He narrowly observes the defences of the heart, and does not fail to detect the unguarded points. These he will surprise and assail repeatedly, until the citadel falls under his power. There are weaknesses in the strongest of human characters, and if the individual is properly

acquainted with these vulnerable points, he may strengthen the defences, and guard them with greater vigilance against the incursions of spiritual foes. But if the heart is not occupied by the Holy Ghost, he contends unequally, and must fall an easy prey to the adversary of souls. It is a remarkable fact, that men eminent for holiness have fallen into sin from assaults least expected. Points of character upon which persons rely with confidence have become the occasion of their overthrow. Who would have ventured the opinion that Moses, who stood so calmly under the storms of popular fury, and bore himself so patiently as to have accorded to him the high distinction of being the meekest man, should, for the want of it on one occasion, incur the displeasure of God, and be denied entrance into the promised land on account of a rash expression? How singular! that the heroic Elijah, who so bravely stood before a company of soldiers, and boldly denounced Ahab as the troubler of Israel, should, after submitting patiently to the austerities of that life peculiar to the ancient seers, yield to a spirit of despondency when alone, and exclaim: "It is enough, Lord, let me die." Who, but the omniscient Saviour, could have predicted the weakness and fall of the resolute Peter? And these sad relapses are still occurring, warning us against a too confident reliance upon any trait of character, and teaching us the importance of a rigid watchfulness over our whole nature.

There are innumerable ways in which the corruptions that linger in our nature after its renewal, may acquire strength for a terrible conflict with grace.

There is one, who was a warm competitor in the race for distinction. All the energies of his soul were thrown into the struggle for fame; he toiled long and laboriously towards the coveted prize. But he is arrested by the Spirit of God, light from heaven flashes upon his mind, and, convinced of sin and the perishableness of human glory, he lies trembling at the footstool of mercy. He has surrendered his heart to Jesus, and now starts in pursuit of laurels that fade not, and of a crown that dims not: he runs well for a season, but the love of earthly distinction gradually revives, a conflict ensues, and he grasps a *bubble and loses a throne*. The man of worldly affluence begins to lay up imperishable treasures in heaven. He commences a life of self-denial and benevolence; his treasures seek channels to gladden a weary world; and he seems ready to imitate the example of Him, Who was rich and became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. But his earnestness declines, he prays less, and the realities of eternal life flash less vividly to the eye of faith; earthly splendor and wealth augment their charms as those of heaven are obscured, and anon he becomes as covetous as ever; and, instead of serving the Lord in the beauty of holiness, he again worships at the shrine of the golden god. Thus, all those pursuits and enjoyments which excluded God and eternity from the minds of men, will, after they have made some progress on the narrow road, renew their efforts to win them back to bondage. Satan will stimulate those desires for the flesh-pots of Egypt, that, if possible, they may forfeit their title to heaven. Whenever the Christian pilgrim

finds himself strongly pressed by temptation, he should fly to his refuge. Let him hasten to the bosom of Jesus, and, planted upon the Rock of Ages, let him use that powerful weapon, *prayer*, which will enable him to overcome. In Him, and through Him, the believer shall conquer; but let him lay hold on that Almighty arm that is continually extended for his support, and with that arm he will draw about him the impregnable defences of Omnipotence. The pilgrim to the heavenly Canaan cannot always remain without trials. He must expect, while rejoicing amid the delights of his spiritual Elims, that a desert lies before him, which intervenes between him and the home of the redeemed. Let him joyfully and courageously endure the afflictive dispensations of Providence. Do you grow weary under the long-continued pressure? Are you tempted to distrust your Saviour, amid the drought and heats of this desert life? Crush the rising murmur; say with the patriarch: "Though he slay me, yet will I love him." Confide in His wisdom, and remain unshaken in your trust in the Divine mercy. Though your faith may be feeble, your Redeemer is omnipotent. Your spirit pants wearily as your nerveless limbs tread the rugged roads; gird up your minds, look yonder to the hills of life, where they cry hallelujah! Those white-robed harpers, that victorious throng, were once on their pilgrimage through the same desert; then suffering, but now reigning with Christ. "Be ye followers of them who, through faith and patience, inherited the promises."

CHAPTER XIV.

MANNA — THE HEAVENLY FOOD OF THE PILGRIMS.

Read Exodus xvi. 11—36.

“They gathered it every morning.” — EXODUS xvi. 21.

“And man did eat angels’ food.” — PSALMS.

THIS narrative offers another interesting exhibition of the resources of Israel’s God. He taught them in a manner as beautiful as it was impressive, that His power is as boundless as His bounty is exhaustless. What can be more beautiful than the descending showers upon the thirsty plains? I rose from my couch this morning with a spirit sad and worn by my ever-present gnawing pains; I stepped forth into my garden, which commands a splendid view of a most charming valley, where the bloom of spring was jewelled with millions of dewy gems, tributes from the sky, all flashing with the glory of the morning sun, and my weary soul gathered upon its bosom that image of beauty, as it rose on the joyful pinions of praise to the throne of Eternal Love. An effect very similar do I experience in the presence of this Scripture scene. It brings vividly to view the same God, and the same result, with this difference only — that the descending manna is at once formed into bread, whereas the other passes through a process as complicated as it is beautiful, before it becomes the staff of life. Yet, God as

truly provides our "daily bread," as He furnished a table in the wilderness.

The manna that afforded sustenance to the Israelite during his forty years' journey towards the earthly Canaan, and that Divine aliment upon which the pilgrim to heaven subsists, constitute topics of interesting and profitable discussion. It is proper here, on the very threshold of this inquiry, to state that the manna was not a natural product, but a miraculous provision. This will appear conclusive, from considerations in relation to its nature which it is important to urge, and, more especially urgent, since we must here also encounter the opinions of those who are disposed to wrest from every Divine interposition its miraculous garb, and invest it with the complexion of natural causes. Some, perhaps innocently, because they do not wish to crowd the sacred record with the monuments of a present God; but others, with a fixed purpose, however plausibly veiled by the network of science, do undermine the authority of the Scriptures, and consequently diminish the force of their influence on mankind. These miracles in the Holy Oracles are foundation blocks upon which our glorious biblical structure rests, and, if they could be removed, the temple of truth would cease to echo with the utterances of the awful God, but resound with the crash of its own falling materials. Even well-meaning, pious men, have attributed some of the most notable miracles to the operation of natural causes. Such, for example, as the flood, the standing still of the sun, the destruction of the cities of the plain, and others. In relation to the subject under consideration, learned men have taxed their ingenuity,

thought profoundly, but labored fruitlessly to prove that the manna spoken of in this narrative was the same as that now found in various parts of Arabia. But all the skill and learning brought to this work have been inadequate to establish anything like a reasonable presumption that it was a natural product. There is therefore but one alternative, men must either admit that it was a miraculous product, or reject the account of it by Moses as unworthy of belief. The force of this statement will be seen, by comparing the manna specially provided for God's chosen in the wilderness, with that now found in some of the eastern countries.

There is a medicinal drug, used by physicians, called manna. It is imported from Sicily and Calabria, and is naturally formed into small globules, and sweet to the taste. The tree that yields it belongs to the ash species. In the hot season, the leaves, branches, and trunks of these trees exude a white honey juice, which is hardened by the sun and is then fit for use. It is essentially different from the manna gathered by Israel in the wilderness, as will be manifest from the following comparison of the two substances.

1. The manna which God provided for His people possessed highly nutritious properties. It constituted their only bread for the space of forty years; but the manna now in use will neither nourish, nor support life.

2. That upon which the Hebrews subsisted could not be kept over night without a special act of Providence, while the medicinal drug so effectually resists the action of the atmosphere, that it may be trans-

ported to any place, and remain exposed for days without losing its virtues.

3. The manna that fell around the camp of the pilgrims in the desert was gathered in double quantities on the day preceding the Sabbath, and remained good over the day of rest. The inference is therefore just, that a double quantity fell on the sixth day of the week, which never occurs with the natural manna; and, also, that the portion designed for their use on the Sabbath was miraculously preserved.

4. It did not fall at all on the Sabbath day — this peculiarity is not incident to the natural product.

5. The manna provided for Israel fell daily (excepting the Sabbath) for the space of forty years, whereas that now produced can only be obtained during March and April. Differing, therefore, in so many particulars from the medicinal drug which has received its name, the only rational conclusion is, that it was a miraculous food. It came down from heaven — it always fell where the Israelites were encamped. The Psalmist, when rehearsing the Divine goodness to His people, says — “The Lord gave them bread from heaven, and man did eat angels’ food.” While the manna was the staff of life to the Israelites during their sojourn in the wilderness, it was also designed to teach a great spiritual lesson.

The pilgrim to the heavenly Canaan is also nourished by manna while he journeys through this desert world. Jesus, our glorified Redeemer, is that Divine food upon which the soul of the believer subsists. It is not improbable that even those wanderers in the desert had a dim apprehension of the spiritual purport

of that amazing provision. It may be, that while gathering and consuming the manna, the eternal spirit conducted their minds to the great Restorer of Israel promised to their fathers—the world's Messiah, who is emphatically the bread of life to a perishing world. The Redeemer himself so understood and expounded the typical significance of that miraculous provision. John vi. 48-52, He says—“I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead. This is the bread that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man shall eat of this bread he shall live forever; and the bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” In the Apocalypse He speaks in one of the epistles to the seven churches in a similar manner—“To him that overcometh I will give to eat of the hidden manna.” It appears manifest from these and other affirmations in Scripture, that the provision in the desert was designed as a symbol of Jesus, who is the only true spiritual nourishment for a famishing world. Keeping this in view, let us gather a few lessons for the comfort and encouragement of the strangers and pilgrims now passing through this wilderness world, by considering those points of resemblance, which the picture suggests, in the condition of the Israelite and that of the Christian.

The most obvious lesson first suggested is, that the principle of life, whether animal or spiritual, requires nourishment. There is not a creature nor plant in the wide circle of creation that does not demand an aliment suited to its nature and the laws of its being. The

fowls of the air, the fishes of the sea, the beasts of the forest, the larger tribes, as well as those who people the microscopic world, are all pensioners of the Divine bounty. The diminutive insect that sports in a drop of water, whose history is comprehended within the limits of an hour, needs sustenance to support its brief existence, just as truly as the whale, whose term of life stretches through a century. The worm that performs its evolutions in the dust, is as dependent upon God as the lion that roams the pathless wild. What a sublime picture of the Divine bounty! What myriads of creatures compose His household! What inconceivable numbers share the goodness of Him of whom it is said — “Thou openest thy hand and suppliest the wants of every living thing.” The various plants and flowers which adorn the vegetable kingdom are constantly drawing nourishment from the earth. It is not merely necessary to sow a plant, that there may be food for man and herb for the beast; but there are certain conditions required to promote its growth. Sunshine, air, and moisture, are active agents in the transition of the germ from its incipient to its matured state. To sustain human life and health, there are at least three things essential — the air we breathe, the water we drink, and food to nourish. The Israelite would have perished in the wilderness, had not the heavens dropped manna.

Thus also is it with the Christian. His spiritual life needs sustenance if it is to continue vigorous. Once dead in trespasses, he was utterly insensible to the great interests of his soul; possessed of all the faculties which appertain to the constitution of man,

yet destitute of that element of spiritual life, absolutely important to the discharge of those exalted functions that link themselves with his immortal destiny. God, to him, was then only a cold abstraction, and neither justly apprehended nor loved by his soul. He was not conscious of personal elevation into sympathetic union with the universe of holy beings, nor real fellowship with the majesty of heaven; he had no "foretaste of the powers of the world to come." But Christ has quickened him. Into that sluggish fountain there was cast a spark of grace, and his heart has become a well of water springing up into everlasting life. Those amazing mental capacities that were called into play simply by surrounding objects, had infused into them an element of life, that now lifts his aspirations to the infinite Jehovah. And, as in all animate things life is only the effect of a mysterious, but present power, so Christ, in the believing soul, constitutes the source of spiritual life. Christ dwelling in us by faith, is that living principle of a higher existence. This new life requires aliment, and if the means necessary to its support are withheld, death must ensue.

In accordance with this well-known fact, a merciful Father has made provision for our spiritual wants. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have life everlasting." He who rained manna around the camp of Israel, and who still supplies the wants of every living thing from the inexhaustible storehouses of nature, gives, with yet richer munificence, Jesus as the bread of life to the world. As the manna satisfied their hunger while it invigo-

rated their bodies, thus Christ nourishes and strengthens the immortal spirit. Jesus is the only food that can fill the hungry millions of our race. When God made the human heart, he gave to it that immensity of desire which is one of its most striking resemblances to the Infinite Mind. He impressed upon the soul the Divine seal of His own immensity, and said to it: "Everything that surrounds thee exists for thy benefit, but thy existence is for me alone: therefore I have placed within thee a capacity that knows no limits. As I have formed the mighty abyss of the ocean to receive the gathering together of the waters, and the limitless expanse of the heavens to contain the innumerable bodies of light which roll in the canopy above, so have I formed thee greater than all these, that thou mayest receive and possess thy God. Thou shalt be ever empty until I fill thee, ever hungry till I nourish thee, ever burning with thirst until I flow into thee as a torrent of delights." Christ in God, and as God and Redeemer, is alone a soul-filling object. "Crucified (with Him) to the world I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life I now live, I live by faith on the Son of God." A branch on the ever-living Vine, the believer draws spiritual nourishment from the parent stem. As the pulsations of our heart send out through the complicated organism of our physical structure the vital fluid, imparting strength and beauty to the entire man, so intimate is the dependence of the soul for immortal life upon the exalted Redeemer. We are members of His mystical body. He is the fountain of joy, of consolation, and lively hope to the pilgrim to Zion.

“The world can never give
The bliss for which we sigh.”

No, its pleasures pall, its honors vanish, its treasures perish—all are husks upon which the soul must famish. The wealth of its offerings is spurned as a gift utterly unsuited to fill the capacities of the undying spirit. Man may, in the pursuit of business, amid the bustle of the world and the ferment of society, be borne onward by waves of excitement, and realize a certain satisfaction, while a breath of delight sweeps over his sensibilities, but it is an incomplete, a perishable happiness; it dies like a spark in the air. Concentrate all worldly delights in His cup, gather all earth's glory in a flaming diadem upon His head; and, like a monarch borne down to the burning sands by the weight of his jewels and gold, perishing for the want of bread and water, so the favored child of the world dies a wretch when out of Christ. The world stills no anxious throb, quiets no pang, dispels no gloom, kindles none of those aspirations that link the soul with the Eternal Throne, nor begets those hopes whose effulgence blends with the glory of heaven. Nothing temporal can send those ecstatic thrills through the holy depths of our being which the religion of the cross inspires. Away, then, with the pretensions and promises of the earth to bless; they are delusive, they are vain. The adorable Saviour, in his various offices, alone can furnish the needful manna to sustain the pilgrim on his way to the celestial Canaan. Here, O my soul, do thou linger! here, by this Tree of Life, feed only upon His fruit, rest thee in His shadow: He is thy manna, ever fresh, delicious, and life-giving. Though still in the

wilderness, O my soul, He is unto thee a garden of fragrant flowers and delicious fruits ; thine oasis, thine everlasting, all-sufficient good.

The Israelite quitted his tent early each morning to gather the manna which the hand of God had scattered around the camp. The Lord caused it to descend in such places where it would be accessible, but he did not drop it into their tents. This teaches the Christian Pilgrim, that if he would feed upon Christ, the living bread, he must use exertion to approach him. His faith must pass away and beyond himself, and fix upon the victim of Calvary. We must leave our homes and come to the house of God, where Christ is preached, that we may be nourished by the droppings of the sanctuary. There duties are inculcated, instruction in varied forms is imparted, and supplications for "our daily bread" are made to the Hearer of prayer. Indeed, our spiritual growth will greatly depend upon our exertions to advance in all that relates to exalted Christian excellence. It is stated in this narrative that the manna was of the size of a coriander seed, and each individual would necessarily be occupied a considerable time in gathering a sufficient quantity for his daily consumption. For wise considerations, God has placed the Christian Pilgrim under a similar discipline. He cannot in a moment make the transition from the infancy of spiritual life to its blessed maturity. He is not instantaneously made absolutely holy, nor in a moment so enriched with Divine grace that he is filled with all the fulness of God. It is by patient hearing, earnest believing, and importunate praying, that the soul is feasted upon the

hidden manna to fulness and satisfaction. As the Lord may, on some occasions, have scattered it more sparingly in the wilderness, so as to require greater exertion to obtain the needful supply, thus, also, does an inscrutable Providence now permit the pilgrim to heaven to come to a throne of grace repeatedly before his soul is satisfied with the bread of life. Pray, then; and, if the manna does not immediately descend, pray again; yea, seven times, until He does open the windows of heaven, and send you such a blessing as there shall not be room to receive it.

They gathered it every morning, and were therefore reminded, at the beginning of each day, of the source whence their supply came, and the goodness of Him who provided for their daily wants. Every grain gathered should have excited feelings of gratitude and praise to a bountiful Providence. Their first thoughts upon waking were directed to their duty, and associated with their gracious Preserver. There is something beautiful in that simplicity of faith exhibited, as they rose from their slumbers and went forth, not doubting, but with assured hearts that they should find it all ready for them. The Christian pilgrim should make it his first business, on each dawning day, to gather the needful food for his soul. He should come to a throne of grace as confidently as the Israelite sought the manna, and with a believing heart should feed upon Him who is the bread of life. There must not, there dare not, be an omission of this daily exercise. Without prayer there can be no growth in grace, no progress towards heaven. The Christian must have stated periods for devotion; holy hours are indispen-

sable to his peace, and to his advancement in spiritual life. David called upon the Lord, morning, noon and evening. Daniel thrice each day opened his windows that looked towards the Holy City, and prayed. All who, in the past, were eminent for piety, shining lights, stars in the moral firmament, under the power of whose influence the world was moved, and society renovated, were men of prayer. So delightful is communion with God, that when the habit is once formed, the soul pants for those seasons as the hart panteth after the water brooks, and neither business, pleasure, nor company, will prevent the individual from feeding upon the bread of life. He may not neglect the ordinances of the sanctuary; with him religion is an every day work, and his piety is not put on and off like his Sunday apparel, but clothes his spirit as a robe of righteousness, shining amid all the walks and vicissitudes of his pilgrimage. He presumes not upon the attainment of a stock of grace at one time that shall last him through his journey. The Israelite could not lay up stores in Egypt, nor gather a harvest of manna in one day, that would be equal to his subsequent wants. The Christian cannot lay in stores of grace at one communion, or during the services at one Sabbath, to last him until the recurrence of similar seasons. If we should eat in the beginning of the week, and abstain from nourishment afterwards, would not the body become enfeebled, and life become extinct? Can the soul more easily dispense with Christ as its daily food, and not lose its energy and spiritual life? They gathered it every morning; so let the Christian pilgrim imitate their example. What an interesting spectacle

to angels, to behold the Israelites, aged and young, going forth at early dawn, each one gathering his omer of manna ; and what an interesting sight, to witness a whole community moving forth to encompass a throne of grace, and imploring the bread of life. Suffer no worldly interest to draw you aside ; rather devote less time to your exertions for the meat that perishes, than not to labor for that which endureth to eternal life. "For what is a man profited, if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul ; or what shall he give in exchange for his soul."

The subject under consideration affords, moreover, a beautiful picture of family devotion. The necessity of the daily sacrifice on the family altar, is taught in the fact that they gathered it every morning. An omer for each member of the household. There were doubtless those among them, who could not go out to gather it for their own use, who yet subsisted upon the manna ; for these the strong labored. Even infants were partakers of this heavenly food ; for the manna replenished those fountains in the bosoms of their mothers from which they were nourished. The exercises of the family altar embrace the lambs of the flock. While parents there feed upon the bread that cometh down from heaven, there descend upon the souls of their children those influences which nourish their faith, and bring them into living union with Christ. The family altar makes impressions upon the mind that can never be erased. How often have children gone out upon the activities of life without the ornament of grace which their parents had prayed might adorn them, and after the lapse of years the

memories of home, and the earnest pleadings of fond hearts for their salvation, have risen up with such irresistible power as to lead them humble penitents to the feet of the great Redeemer. Job offered sacrifice, "burnt-offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said, it may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually." At the altar of grace memories grow up, feelings and hopes are begotten upon which the pious soul subsists. However dispersed the members of a household may be, they may hold daily communion with each other.

"There is a scene where spirits blend,
Where friend holds fellowship with friend;
Though sundered far, by faith they meet
Around one common mercy seat."

There was always a full supply of manna for all Israel. Of that great multitude, not one remained unfed. The bread of life is abundant, adequate to nourish all the pilgrims journeying to the celestial Canaan. "There is bread enough and to spare in my father's house," said the perishing one. The provisions of the gospel are amply sufficient for all the world. Christ died for all—none are excluded from the benefits of His atonement. The feast is ready, the messengers are gone into all the world, proclaiming to the needy and perishing: "Behold all things are ready, come ye to the marriage supper of the Lamb."

In conclusion, we should observe that, the Israelite needed the manna until he entered the promised land. Daily it descended from the store-houses of God, daily did they gather this heavenly food until they quitted

the desert for the "land flowing with milk and honey." They had then no farther need of this miraculous provision, and it ceased to fall, for their land was rich in all the products suited to the comfort of man. Here, also, does the experience of the Israelite repeat itself in the life of the Christian. As a pilgrim he has need of Christ through all his journey. His comfort, and his progress towards a blissful immortality, require daily nourishment upon the hidden manna. When ushered into the Heavenly Canaan, where the tree of life yields him fruit, and where the Lamb leads to fountains of living waters, then, and *there* they shall neither hunger, nor thirst any more. There we shall have done with weakness and pain, there the soul shall be unutterably happy, because it rejoices with Christ amid the unveiled glories of immensity.

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CHAPTER XV.

THE SMITTEN ROCK: THE RELIEF OF THE PERISHING.

Read Exodus xvii. 1-7.

It is not singular that the casual reader of Exodus should sometimes wonder that the immense multitude was led about through the desert for so many years, and not directly conducted to Canaan. But, as all Providential dealings are suggested by Infinite wisdom, so here will the study of the Lord's procedure with Israel soon reveal the objects which He intended to accomplish by keeping them for so long a period amid the limits of that pathless wild. They were not possessed of the requisite qualifications to enter at once the promised land. They had as yet no laws, civil or religious, and, without wisely-arranged institutions they would have been totally incompetent for the part which they were to act in the great drama of the world's history. They required education, mental and moral discipline: they had none in Egypt. Their noble leader, and much more, God, knew, that such an inheritance, without the necessary culture to appreciate its value and its accompanying responsibilities, would be no blessing. To have remained stationary during their course of training would have impaired their health and wasted their flocks. But why choose the desert as the scene of their instruction? Mani-

festly for the reason that *there* the dealings of God would be more marked and impressive than in a region of plenty. Jehovah is as truly the spring of human blessings in the fertile plain, covered with golden harvests and watered with flowing streams, as when he rains bread from heaven, and brings water from the rock; but the mode in which they are provided, is not so palpable to the senses, and therefore appeals not so strongly to the heart. The reason of this is obvious; in one instance these gifts are the products of laws in which Divinity is veiled; in the other such a shield does not interpose between the observer and the Power that miraculously provides for his necessities. The religious element was designed to be the dominant principle in the Jewish government. The people were to recognise Jehovah as their sovereign, and it was therefore important to bring them into sensible union with the Lord. With them, He must fill the place of an earthly ruler, as well as the office of a spiritual king. God fed them directly out of His storehouse, rewarded their obedience, and punished their disobedience, that they might know Him as ruling in their midst. He constructed their social, civil, and religious institutions. The owner of the world gave to the seed of Abraham the land of Canaan. He was now preparing them to enter upon its possession. He fought their battles, drove out the heathen, and presided over their destiny. Infinite Wisdom always adapts the means to the end, and, in this course of the moral and political training of the chosen people, He was laying the foundations of an empire whose glory should blend with the grandeurs of the millenium, and

gleam in the splendors of that day, when our redeemed humanity shall be seen flashing with the holiness of Jesus. Looking to the commanding interests involved in that training, and the grandeur of that national destiny, which canopied the scheme of redemption, we cease to wonder at the long and complicated course which conducted to their realization. To their minds, the reasons which actuated the Divine Being in ordaining their allotments were not so manifest as they are now; and a like obscurity now clothes the dealings of Providence with His children. He brings them in paths which they knew not, and in ways which they could not have known. He sometimes withers their beautiful things, and makes of their pleasant places a desert, as cheerless to the eye as it is wearisome to travel. They marvel that the road to the heavenly Canaan should be so circuitous and so difficult, that they must carry over it broken hearts, disappointed hopes, and, weeping as they go, ask with deep concern—"Is this the way to Zion?" Courage, thou tried, afflicted pilgrim, "what thou knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter." When thou hast scaled these rugged mountains, breasted these cold torrents, and risen to the presence of God, you will find your "re-compense of reward," in the glorious realities glowing over the wide bosom of eternity. There the weary shall rest, and the redeemed will look back with joy and behold those penitential tears, that marked their progress through life, transformed into gems, and the thorns that wounded changed into a fadeless crown.

The Israelite in Rephidim is again surrounded by an arid waste, he is again subjected to suffering. The

daily descending manna supplied them with food, but they are destitute of water; what shall they do? They reproach Moses for bringing them into this place. "And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, What shall I do unto this people?" God directed him to go on before them, taking with him the elders and the rod wherewith he smote the river. "Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb, and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink." Having smitten the rock copious streams gushed out, and the panting multitude is refreshed. From a number of travellers, such as Norde, Pococke, and Shaw, we gather the following description of this rock: "This rock is a vast block of red granite, fifteen feet long, ten feet broad, and twelve feet high, and lies in the wilderness Rephidim, to the west of Mount Horeb, a part of Sinai. There are abundant traces of this wonderful miracle remaining to this day, such as holes and channels which have been formed by the bursting out and flowing of water."

This rock is an emblem of Christ; and the relation which the comfort of the Israelite held to the smitten rock in Horeb, illustrates the dependence of the Christian upon his pierced Redeemer for the blessings of salvation. The apostle Paul (1 Cor. 10 : 4), alluding to this amazing miracle, accords to it a higher office than that of simply supplying their temporal comfort. That was its primary object; but there was another more glorious end which it subserved: "And did all drink the same spiritual drink, for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock

was Christ." From this language we are authorized to infer that it was intended that their faith should derive spiritual refreshment from Christ Jesus, their prospective Messiah. The manna and the streams from this rock constituted permanent supplies for these pilgrims for the space of forty years, the period of their sojourn in the desert. The manna and the water were typical of Jesus Christ glorified, as He is the source and fountain of spiritual nourishment to the pilgrims journeying to the celestial Canaan. As the water flowed from the rock, so also flow from Christ streams of living water. "He that believeth on me," as the Scripture hath said, "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." (John 7 : 38.) "He is the Ζωή for the entire human race." Some of the Rabbins supposed that the rock followed them; but this opinion was as fanciful as many of their other dreams. Calvin, and also Bilioth regard the phrase, "followed them," as referring to the water, or the rock signifying the water — a mode of expression sanctioned by custom, where the effect is represented by the cause from which it proceeds. But another distinguished divine still more philosophically observes, "that it is certainly not of the rock itself, but of the spiritual rock, i. e., of the rock in a spiritual sense: that it followed the Israelites, and it therefore corresponds better with the meaning of the Apostle to receive it as signifying that the divine presence of Christ, the Son of God, the bestower of all things, was ever present with them — His blessing likewise accompanying them." This exposition of Olshausen is as beautiful as it is just, and must commend itself to the consideration of

all impartial Biblical scholars, even if it does not fully harmonize with their views. To understand the meaning, and to see the beauty of the Bible, we must view it as the production of one Infinite Mind, all its parts depending upon and illustrating one another; and just in proportion as we can rise to a comprehensive perception of the scheme of redemption, and the Church in its entirety, from its origin through all the stages of its development, we shall behold the veil of mystery lifted from its beautiful and symmetrical proportions. In accordance with this conception of the Bible, and the dependency of the old dispensation upon the new for the illustration and significance of its types and symbols, we regard this Scripture narrative of the rock in Horeb, in connection with the manna, as symbolic of the most stupendous and sublime mysteries of our holy religion. The plan of Deity seems to have comprehended all the glorious realizations of Christianity in the symbols that distinguish the economy of the old dispensation. It was ordained of God, that not only the ceremonies prescribed in the Old Testament for the worship of the Almighty, but also the narratives relating to the people of God, were to form types of a higher spiritual condition, viz.: the institution of Christianity, its doctrine and history. Thus, in the passage of Paul (1 Cor. 10 : 4), the history of Israel is typically received as referring to the sacramental rites of baptism and the Lord's Supper, which contain, like a holy vessel, all the blessings of the Gospel; and thus, in this passage lies indirectly a powerful argument for these two sacraments.

Recurring now to our pilgrims, we may contrast

their condition while destitute of these supplies, with their state after they were brought to the Rock, smitten and flowing with life-giving streams. The desert affords a striking picture of the world, destitute of the blessings of redemption. First, in regard to its cheerless aspect. What can be more so, than a wide waste, glowing under a burning sun, with no shrub, nor tree, nor fountain, nor bird, nor music, to vary the scene, or to break the painful stillness. An air of desolation that oppresses the heart reigns over the vast expanse. The world, with no Redeemer, has no moral excellence; it is barren of spiritual blessings; no moral glories bloom there. The earth, viewed in the light of eternity, is as dreary as the desert, so far as it affects an immortal spirit, awakened from its dreamy, sinful existence, to a consciousness of the deceitfulness and vanity of the world. The desert possesses nothing to sustain the physical man. Behold the panting traveler, how difficult does he find it to bear up under the fatigues of his journey! What multitudes have there sunk exhausted into the glowing sand, to rise no more! Where could you find a more impressive image of the spiritual barrenness of a world destitute of redeeming mercy, than is offered by the wilderness of Rephidim? Multitudes have hastened hither and thither in quest of spiritual aliment, yet, away from Christ, felt the ever-present "aching void;" they found no rest, no peace. They hew out cisterns, but they are broken, and hold no water; unwilling to come to the living fountain, they perish forever.

Accustomed to view the world as it now is, filling with the light and glory of Jesus, it is difficult to

realize fully what would be the deplorable condition of humanity in the absence of the numberless blessings which Christianity bestows upon all. But we may approximate in some measure the ideal of such a state of things, by contemplating the glorious blessings that have flowed, and are still flowing, from the smitten Rock. Look attentively into human society; examine all the excellencies that make up the sum of human happiness; trace them to their source, and you will find their springs in Christ. The gospel hallows the institution of the family. It makes it an Eden still; and, though neither sinless nor secured against blight and desolation, it will bring its inmates to a brighter home in heaven. It has begotten those endearments so precious in the circle of kindred spirits. It infuses a spirit of gentleness and kindness; it elevates and refines, and causes the members of the family to blend intimately, as the beams of light that make the day of glorious sunshine. It exalts the relation that exists between parents and children, and gives the strength and glory of immortality to that bond of union. The gospel forms the public conscience; it promotes justice and humanity. It guards the purity of morals, and defends those fountains in society which it first consecrated to God. It sends a healthful influence through the entire social structure, and breathes vitality into the body politic, while it forms the only basis of rational freedom, and constitutes the only durable pillar of our noble institutions. All humane and benevolent enterprises, now sending light and consolation over our afflicted race, together with every other agency that conveys the healing balm to the wounds of humanity,

are the offspring of Christianity. These are the streams flowing from the smitten Rock. Christ, the fountain, sends out these rivers of blessing, to relieve the woes and miseries of mankind. Without these heavenly gifts and hopes, what wickedness, what crime, would deluge our earth! Here, there is much of pain, of misery, and of crime, notwithstanding the checks which a preached gospel throws upon the passions of men. But what an appalling spectacle would this world offer, were those restraints removed that are associated with the tremendous retributions of eternity? It would set loose and in diabolical play all the foul and malignant passions of the depraved. It would lift the mountain pressure from the volcano, and flood the world with its desolating waves. It would be the unsealing of those dark fountains of iniquity whose waters would blight every moral excellence, and spread disastrous ruin over the beautiful heritage of God.

Rephidim, without its streams, was a scene of weeping, chiding, and reproach. Sinful murmurs rose to heaven, and utterances of rebellion ascended from that turbulent crowd of disaffected spirits. But how remarkable was the change produced when the floods gushed from the granite rock! It revived their bodies, it rekindled hope in their bosoms. Those harsh upbraidings are turned into songs of deliverance. Along the flowing streams there appear the green grass and the cheerful shrubbery, and the caroling birds mingle their notes with the voice of thanksgiving; an interesting picture of the experience of the Christian pilgrim who drinks draughts of salvation from the

Rock of Ages. Like the Israelite, he was perishing for lack of water; his spirit was chafed and gloomy from sin; but, blessed God, what a change! With streaming eyes he looks to heaven, rejoicing; for he has found the waters of life, and is made glad. The Israelite still endured hardships; but they could be borne with meekness, now that he gathered strength from the descending manna, and was refreshed by the crystal stream. The pilgrim to heaven must needs encounter obstacles in his progress after he has attained the fullest assurance of faith, yet is he able to overcome by the renewal of his strength from communion with God. The supplies were abundant and accessible to the Israelite, but he had to gather the manna and take to his lips the flowing stream; so, also, must the Christian seek in daily supplications the needful grace to persevere, and linger by the Rock whence gush the living waters. As already stated, the manna and the water were typical of Christ, and represent the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper; for these comprehend in a certain sense all the blessings of the gospel. The worthy participant in these divinely-ordained means of grace is nourished unto life everlasting. We have, therefore, the same lesson taught here that is perpetually enforced in the rites and history of the Israelite, viz: that the soul only occupies a safe position, and is prosperously advancing on the way to eternal happiness, after it is outwardly, as well as inwardly, in unison with Christ's body—the Church. There is a delusion abroad, and it is growing, that causes men to regard a profession of religion and a participation in its ordinances as un-

necessary to salvation, though the opportunity frequently offers to confess Christ before men. The idea is, that they are as good out of the Church, as in it; that they may enjoy all the blessings, without assuming the responsibilities of the Christian. A singular infatuation is this; for as well might the perishing Israelite have presumed on despising the provisions made for him in the desert: the ordinances of religion are to the Christian, what those streams and the manna were to the Israelite. To slight them, is to peril our highest interests. It is a device of the devil to produce such an opinion; and while it dishonors God and pours indignity upon the Founder of the Church, it is ruinous to their hopes, and disastrous to their souls.

The Church is God's husbandry; here, within her bosom, there is safety and peace; beyond her enclosure, man is exposed to wrath. Standing by those streams that come from the smitten Rock, and make glad the city of God, I would lift my voice with the prophet, and cry: "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters of life, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Ye panting, perishing wanderers from God, behold these streams of healing, of salvation, that flow from a pierced Saviour! Behold, wretched man, the life-giving flood, gushing from the wounds of Jesus! hasten hither, and plunge beneath the purple flood, that your guilt may be washed away! With Him, as your guide, defender and Saviour, you can safely tread the desert, for He is an impregnable refuge; an infallible guide; and, under the canopy of His love, your soul will dwell in "green pastures and

beside the still waters." "The Spirit and the bride say, Come, and let him that heareth say Come, and whosoever is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him come and partake of the waters of life freely." He is the only shelter for sinners, the only hope of the perishing! Out of Him, and away from God, there is no peace. Many have come, many still come, to Christ and His Church, saying:

"People of the living God,
I have sought the world around;
Paths of sin and sorrow trod,
Peace and comfort nowhere found.
Now to you my spirit turns,
Turns a fugitive unblest;
Brethren, where your altar burns,
O! receive me into rest."

CHAPTER XVI.

AMALEK AND SATAN.—THE BATTLE OF THE ISRAELITES WITH THE AMALEKITES, A SYMBOL OF THE CHRISTIAN'S WARFARE WITH THE KINGDOM OF DARKNESS.

Read Exodus, xvii. 8.

HERE is the first battle, in the first chapter of that record of wars, fought by the Jewish nation in her progress towards a brilliant destiny. The first blow that is struck for a national existence may send its vibrations through coming centuries. The battle here chronicled breathed its animating influence through all their future successes, while even from this distant view it stands out as a sublime trophy, prophetic of the future conquests of God's hosts over the empire of darkness. To some minds there is something animating in descriptions of such encounters, for unsanctified nature delights in the shock of contending armies, and fields of carnage; but, to the Christian, their chief interest is in their illustrative significance of those spiritual conflicts, through which lies his pilgrimage to glory. The contest of the Israelite with Amalek, presents a striking image of the Christian's warfare with that system of spiritual wickedness, with which he is brought into constant antagonism in his progress to heaven. It was the first opposition that the Israelites experienced in this form, and is a fair illustration of

their subsequent encounters with the enemies of God. Amalek was an illegitimate son of Esau, and had by this time grown into a powerful nation. Having formed an alliance with other tribes, who are represented as the people of Amalek, or the confederates of the nation of Amalekites, they constituted a formidable foe to Israel. Their mode of warfare seems to have been of the guerilla kind; for, it is said that they fell upon and destroyed the feeble in the rear of the Hebrews. Philo says, that Amalek signifies to lick up; to exhaust or consume. As a resolute enemy and an organized force, that warred against God's chosen and labored to destroy them, Amalek is an appropriate representative of the kingdom of darkness; a kingdom at war with Jehovah's empire, and in violent conflict with every subject of the Redeemer's government. The intelligent observer is conscious that there exist in this world two antagonistic moral powers: the one plying appropriate agencies for the elevation of the race and the promotion of the Divine glory, the other is as vigorously employed in efforts to degrade man and to extend the desolations of sin. The Christian is deeply sensible of great disorders in his own constitution, as well as in human society. These felt evils are so wide-spread and disastrous in their influence, that we must infer that an extraordinary force was needed to produce them. Whether the origin of sin as taught in Scripture be, or be not, acknowledged as satisfactory by man, the existence of moral disorders admits of no dispute—they are palpable to his senses. Encompassed by the presence of that terrible power that dares a warfare with the great God, that militates

against all the interests of the soul, it concerns us less how this kingdom originated, and by what means it grew to such alarming proportions, and acquired such fearful destructive energies, than how we may escape its ruinous machinations? The Christian becomes painfully conscious of the strength of sin in his first attempts to overcome his corruptions. He could not have anticipated such obstinate resistance as he encounters in reforming his habits, in rooting up evil passions, changing the current of his desires, and peopling his heart with holy affections. Immediately after his conversion his corruptions commence an internal warfare with the elements of grace; this conflict we have considered, and now pass to an examination of the position occupied by the Christian pilgrim in his relation to the kingdom of darkness. Every organization is distinguished for certain properties, which impart to it a character peculiarly its own.

The kingdom of darkness is evil in its origin, in its nature, in its objects, and operations. Its founder was once an angel of light. He was one of those exalted spirits who ministered around the Eternal Throne. Dwelling in the immediate presence of Jehovah, and mingling with seraphim and cherubim in all their lofty functions, he enjoyed all the immunities of heaven. Amid that scene, all radiant with light and flashing with glory, this kingdom was born—being shrouded in that conception that issued in rebellion against heaven. It was an evil thought, it was a startling idea, and conveys a lesson armed with all the woes which that conception evoked, panoplied with the unutterable calamities which that first thought

inflicted on humanity, and flaming with the appalling fires of perdition, as it utters its warning to man, not to harbor a rebellious purpose or a sinful emotion. The woes which have, through ages, wrung cries of anguish from intelligent beings—the calamities that have swept with dark wing over centuries, blighting the hopes of millions—were all shrouded in that one thought. The curse which threw creation into such paroxysms of anguish that, to-day, their painful throbbings are felt through all the channels of suffering humanity, and seen in the convulsions of nature, that *curse* sprang from that rebellious purpose. All the tortures and torments known by the lost in the past, and those that will be felt in the future, date their origin to that terrible purpose—“rather reign in hell, than serve in heaven.” All the woes on earth or in perdition might have been blotted out, and the fires of hell quenched, by crushing that emotion in the mind of the archangel, which caused him to conspire against the throne of the Eternal. These things—our thoughts and emotions—are often supposed to be of trifling importance, and yet their issues are momentous. A thought has created and overturned thrones; it has preserved, or ruined, kingdoms. A thought has lifted souls to a throne of glory; placed men in possession of a fadeless crown; yea, and also plunged immortal spirits into a deep damnation. There was a wayward youth driven by discontent from the embraces of his father. He wandered into a far country, and spent his substance in riotous living. Wretched, and ready to perish, he thinks of his father’s house, where there is plenty; and he said, “I will arise, and go to my

father ;” and from that purpose evolved a glorious future. Those ambitious aspirings of the proud angels, thrust them from their high eminence of glory into bottomless perdition.

The fall of those angels “who kept not their first estate,” was accompanied with a total destruction of those exalted attributes of virtue found in unfallen spirits. They became thoroughly debased. That first sin was a monster that consumed every good property, and, from benevolent and holy beings, they were transformed into malignant spirits, that in all future time could only be occupied in works of evil. Only one of consummate malevolence could have planned and executed the ruin of man. Even the arch-fiend is represented by Milton as pausing, half-regretful, before he enters Paradise. It was an unfortunate, nay, an evil thought, that caused Eve to linger *alone* among the bowers of Eden. It was that wicked spirit that kindled in her mind the desire to taste the forbidden fruit. Her parley with the serpent, and her act of transgression, were performed under the powerful promptings of the Evil One. The very spot set apart by the Lord as the abode for the human pair, and on which the wealth of Divine munificence was poured, was chosen by Satan to erect the standard around which he would gather a revolted world. There he formed the nucleus of that empire under whose dark shadow the earth now trembles. The corrupt seed has grown into a tree whose fruit has given disease, death, and suffering to the millions of our race. From that point has the kingdom of darkness extended its ramifications over all the globe. That transgression in Paradise

has sent a stream of woes through centuries, swelling as it rolls onward in its fearful violence; blighting, as it moves, all that is beautiful and good. The history of this kingdom is a melancholy record, characterized by constant aggressive movements against the empire of Jehovah. Its progress is marked by blood; murders, assassinations, robbery, and the nameless crimes that afflict society are its daily products. The forces under the Prince of darkness excite human passions; the lust of power and of conquest are engendered and cherished by them, so that the nations of earth are brought into those violent antagonisms that overturn thrones and desolate kingdoms. It has kindled fires that have rolled their consuming waves over empires, and swept away their glory. Its history is sung by the mournful echoes that come from the distant past, uttered in those moans of anguish that flow from the shattered and discordant harps in perdition. But it is not so much what this power has been, or what it has done, that we would consider, as the present state and work of the kingdom of darkness.

Its present organization indicates great growth in malignancy and energy. It has not been enfeebled by age. It has none of those enervating tokens upon it that are sometimes visible in long-established human governments. A spiritual existence—it has followed in its development the laws peculiar to spirit. The most potent of these is the law of progression. A spiritual system can have no limit to its growth—it expands as it exists. As holiness, so, also, sin acquires strength and maturity as it continues its onward progress. Its foundations were laid by angelic minds, and, as we can-

not measure those immense capacities that have swept the universe of thought, so neither can we compass the skill employed in its structure, or the cunning displayed in its organization. It is wisely planned. Its means are adapted to the ends which it is designed to accomplish. Its prime element is enmity against God. Animated by intense malignity, it incessantly wars against the Divine government. Its purposes change not, its efforts weary not, but steadily tend towards the ruin of man and the subversion of the Eternal Throne. The ruler, the laws, and the principles, together with all the other vital elements that enter into its constitution, are pregnant with wickedness. It is evil unmixed and unmitigated. It is, therefore, a terrible power. No earthly kingdom can claim such territorial limits, such resources, or compare with it in the number of its subjects, or the devotion rendered to its service. It has been growing for centuries, its foundation extends to hell. It is so wide-spread that there is no spot on earth where the spirits of evil are not prepared to dispute it with the rightful sovereign. Over this globe no human heart beats, but it has been, or is bound to the throne of the destroyer.

The resources of this kingdom are immense. A commonwealth will have ability to war, in proportion to the variety and character of the materials it may be able to command. A state may estimate its capabilities by its forces and wealth. But the resources of this empire of darkness are inconceivably great. The energy of millions is at its disposal. Every depraved heart pours out streams of corruption. Millions of intellects are bending their tremendous energies to its

advancement. Minds are everywhere laboring to create ingenious and inflammable works of fiction. Multitudes, burning with hatred against Christianity, resort to all possible means to corrupt others. Associations are organized, and funds are freely contributed, to oppose the progress of truth and righteousness. Sin, when it reaches a certain dominion over an individual, imparts infatuation to its victim; so that he will sacrifice time, health, strength and honor to its demands. The press is frequently devoted to the diffusion of its principles, and made the instrument of corruption. The fountains of knowledge are poisoned; the tastes of the people are vitiated; immortal minds are blighted by sin. Productions of all shades and characters, suited to every form of developed depravity, are everywhere brought within the reach of the young. Though the forces of corruption employed by the power of darkness, thus far indicated, are alarming, there are yet others joined with the foregoing, that clothe this kingdom in a still more terrible aspect. The means are innumerable, and the sources exhaustless, from which demoralizing influences go out upon mankind. Apart from the organized associations for the spread of error, and the success of the world by its seductive charms, there are found, in the passions that agitate human nature, the most formidable allies of the kingdom of evil.

It would be an interesting employment to study the mission of the passions while in the service of sin. Such an inquiry would reveal sad results. A picture of the desolation wrought by unsanctified minds, not in a century, but a single year, would be appalling.

Let us view their work within a narrow limit, only for a day. Behold the work of passion in a town or village! The morning dawns, gleams of light flash amid the darkness, and the sleepers awake to a new day. And there, by the couch of each sleeper, stands his evil genius, ready to guide him to his wicked doings. There is the man of avarice. He has been taxing his faculties to mature a plan by which he might defraud his neighbor. Refreshed by a night's repose, he goes forth, ready for his victim. He has studied his instrument; he knows what chord must be touched to secure the responsive sound. His victim may be overcome by strong drink, and he plies him until his mind is clouded, and his judgment overthrown. Or he knows his weak points; he flatters, or misrepresents; his dishonorable tricks succeed, and he chuckles over his success. The fraudulent act is discovered by the injured man, and he becomes distrustful and suspicious of men, while it stimulates the perpetrator of the foul deed to more flagrant acts of injustice. His next victim may be a man laboring under pecuniary pressure. He needs relief that might be given; but the money huckster knows he is in his power; it is an opportunity which he never suffers to slip unimproved; he takes advantage of his neighbor's necessity, and robs him of his property.

Will you go to another of those sleepers? He awakes, to be haunted by a remembered excellence in the character of another, and his envy burns to depreciate and destroy a fair reputation. He will put on the wing a shaft that *shall* wound. He sets afloat a groundless rumor of the character and business stand-

ing of a good man ; he injures, perhaps ruins him and his family. There is another whose memory recalls a real or a fancied wrong ; he hastens forth thirsting for revenge ; he sheds blood, and the sun sets upon another murderer. Another is consuming with base desire ; he trails his victim, and with his artful pliances undermines the virtue of an innocent being ; he shatters and stains a priceless jewel. Another is drawn to his debauches by the adamant cords of vitiated appetites, and hastens to a dishonored grave and an undone eternity. Others, impelled and swayed by unholy passions, burn with enmity against God, and their life is one of breathing curses. Could we summon the passions at the close of each day, to recount the work they wrought within the brief period of a single day in a community, within a State, or over the wide world, what an appalling record of crime would be made up at each successive revolution of the earth ? Even in the circle of our vocation, and the limits of the community which is the sphere of our exertions, how many hearts are daily wrung with envy, tortured by malice, or growing obdurate by avarice ? How many bosoms are torn each day with contending emotions ? Pride inflating the hearts of the rich, drying up their sympathies, once alive towards a laboring world, crushing the feelings of kindred and the affections of childhood, so that the successful, opulent brother, is ashamed of him who is more worthy, but poor ; yet bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh. How often does this passion minister to extravagance, and cause the rich man to waste thousands on gewgaws, or

make magnificent donations where they are not needed, while he suffers a poor relative to perish for want of bread. The victims of pride are legion.

If you could interrogate malice, it would respond, I have been in thousands of hearts to-day. In one I have kindled fires that will consume forever; in that one, I have supplanted love and infused a spirit of hatred. And, after this manner, they might proceed to report a most terrible destruction of amiable dispositions; of holy resolutions; of endearing relations; of generous friendships and holy alliances. What a withering storm do they send out over the bosom of society! What springing graces, what germs of good are blighted or crushed each day! But, extend the circle of your vision—let it embrace a continent, let it comprehend the world—and what havoc is enacted continually under the eye of heaven!

Is it not a terrible power? No mind can measure its proportions, no capacity may calculate the fearful energy it wields. Its operations are as limitless as they are disastrous. Millions of deathless spirits are immolated on its altars. It causes souls to throb with unholy ambition, it pours around multitudes the glare of wealth and the glitter of jewels, and they are blinded to the glories of eternal life. It plies the heart with delusive hopes, it inspires horrid suggestions. It appeals to the intellect by the charms of literature; it holds out temptingly the laurels which it binds upon the brows of successful votaries, and infatuated crowds are charmed away from God, and rush in mad pursuit

after the proffered prize. It has stricken from the firmament, around the throne of God, some of its brightest stars. It has plucked from the high places of earth brilliant intellects, and buried them in bottomless perdition. The hoary-headed offer the dregs of their strength at its shrine, while it adds to the weight of their infirmities the treasures of eternal wrath. The men of stout hearts and strong arms toil for its progress. The young fearlessly enter its charmed circle of influences, and are whirled into ruin. Over our innocent children it throws its adamantine network, and sends through their childish bosoms passions that, if unchecked, will gleam amid eternal burnings. Even the babe of the unconverted mother feels its blighting power as it sucks the venom from the unholy bosom that nourishes its feeble life. This malignant empire wars against Jehovah; it would subvert his government; it would quench every glowing orb, and robe the sun in sackcloth; it would pour a general blight over the grandeurs of the universe, reduce the supreme Sovereign's throne to ashes, and rejoice over the wreck of ruin.

Yet, this kingdom of such fearful attributes has established its authority in every unconverted heart. It is there in all its essential properties—restrained, and perhaps circumscribed in its action—but it is, notwithstanding, *there*. The germ contains the tree—the spark may expand into the volcano. As the sun is imaged in the dew-drop, so is hell pictured in the feeble beginnings of sin. He, in whose bosom sin has found a permanent home, belongs to this dark power, is at

enmity with God, and will be involved in the final destruction of the powers of darkness that have so long and fearfully warred against the peace and glory of Jehovah's empire.

Such, then, is an imperfect delineation of Satan's kingdom, that wars against every believer. The pilgrim to the heavenly Canaan has escaped from its bondage and dominion, but he is pursued and assaulted by the forces of evil. Animated by a spirit that pities not, that battles with unfaltering purpose, the pilgrim must watch and pray. He may not neglect the admonition, "to put on the whole armor of God;" "forasmuch as we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, and against spiritual wickedness in high places." Unaided, he would soon be overcome; but, while to the vision of his faith there is this revelation of his spiritual foes, he, like Elijah's servant, beholds the armies of heaven encamped about him, whilst the voice of God utters the inspiring cry from yonder throne!—"Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." "Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end." In unison with God, he fears not for himself, nor for the glory of his master. Granted, that the resources of the kingdom of darkness are varied and formidable; he stands in living union with Him who commands the resources of the universe. A living faith overcomes the world. Amalek may destroy the feeble, but he shall not prevail over God's elect. God will give his faithful ones the victory. Up! then, ye desponding, ye fearful ones; arise! in the strength of Jesus, for the cry of battle

rings on the breeze. Not only singly, but unitedly join against Amalek. This warfare is now raging between light and darkness, between Christ and Belial, all over the earth; it must go on until the hosts of the devil are vanquished, and the banner of Calvary waves triumphantly from the rivers to the ends of the earth. But how shall the victory be achieved?

CHAPTER XVII.

PRAYER, JOINED WITH EXERTION, SECURES THE VICTORY; OR, THE SUCCESSFUL WARFARE OF OUR PILGRIMS.

Read Exodus xvii. 9-14; Ephesians vi. 12-19.

HAVING surveyed the kingdom of darkness, of which Amalek was made the representative, let us now learn from the conquering Israelite the mode of warfare to be observed by the Christian with his spiritual enemies, so as to issue successfully. The accomplishment of any difficult enterprise demands judicious and well-sustained efforts. The business of making war should always be accompanied with careful deliberation in the councils of those who marshal and conduct the contending forces. A new sphere opened to Moses in Rephidim for the exertion of his talents. On all previous occasions he displayed abilities equal to the emergencies by which he was surrounded. Here, he is equally judicious, and gives proof of a pious and philosophic mind. When he discovered the presence of a hostile force he prepared for the encounter. Though he commands a large multitude, he relies not merely upon their undisciplined strength, but looks to God for its successful application. He appointed a general who showed himself, through all their progress, worthy of the distinguished honor to conduct the Lord's hosts. Joshua was invested with full power to organize

the army, to select subordinate commanders, and dispose them in such a manner as his wisdom might deem best suited to secure harmonious and efficient action. This done, they were led forth to engage the enemy, while Moses sought the presence and help of God. Their first battle was wisely planned and successfully fought. Wisdom points to God as the source of help, while the Bible teaches us clearly that the expectation of succor from the Lord is vain, unless it be accompanied with the exertion of that strength which He has already bestowed. Moses had confidence in prayer as much as in the arms of Joshua. With the wonders wrought for their deliverance in Egypt still glowing upon his memory, he felt assured that He, whose angel had waked a wail of woe over the first-born in every Egyptian household, would send invisible hosts to fight for them, or scatter the forces of Amalek by the breath of His nostrils. To intercede with God for help, he ascended the hill that overlooked the scene of conflict, accompanied by a few friends. He holds in his hand that symbol of power, whose touch had turned the river into blood, divided the sea, and which had brought living streams from the rock in Horeb. *That rod* is again extended to work wonders. All this was done in obedience with instructions received from the Lord. While he prays, with uplifted hands, Israel prevails; but, when his arms sink exhausted, the Amalekites are victorious. To prevent a disastrous issue of the battle, prayer must not be intermitted; Aaron and Hur are therefore appointed to hold up the hands of Moses, that the intercessions of the man of God may secure the discomfiture of their enemies. Here, then, we find

associated physical and moral power, human and divine agency jointly operative in making the Israelite triumphant over his enemy; thus symbolically teaching another lesson for the observance of the Christian pilgrim, viz.: *that exertion, joined with prayer, will make him victorious over his spiritual enemies.*

One of the most remarkable, yet mysterious features in the kingdom of darkness is, the malignant pleasure which its subjects seem to experience in opposing the progress of the traveller to heaven. We might presume that the most deeply fallen would regard with complacency the exertions of an immortal spirit to rise from its degradation and guilt to the light of God's favor. But such is not the fact. The new-born soul is met on the very threshold of the way to glory by determined and pitiless foes. Encountering the most formidable opposition, how shall the pilgrim overcome his antagonists? Measuring his strength with that of his enemies, he becomes conscious that this warfare is to be waged by a feeble child of the dust against principalities and powers, and, consequently, that it would be the height of infatuation to rely for success upon his own resources. He must look beyond himself for energy to overcome. The apostle Paul indicates, in Eph. vi. 10-19, how he must be equipped, and whence he must procure his armor, if he would conquer: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world,

against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."

Here, then, we have the necessary instruction as regards the preparation for successful Christian warfare, whether it be conducted by an individual, or by the Church. All successful advancement in spiritual life is associated with prayer. The pilgrim to the celestial Canaan must place himself in the way to that world of glory. This is done by totally renouncing the kingdom of darkness, quitting forever the service, the maxims, and the pleasures of this world. As a soldier, he dare not forget his weapons; he must be panoplied with the armor of light; and, fully equipped, he may not neglect that other element of success, prayer. His heart must be fortified against the temptations of the world; his mind girded with firm resolution. Not self-reliant, "but strong in the Lord and in the power of his might," make the onset upon his foes. A knowledge of our feebleness will lead us to the source of our strength. A God accessible, is a tower of strength. Here there is infinite omnipotent

energy; exhaustless as to measure, resistless as to power. United to Omnipotence by faith, the prayer of the Christian clothes him with supernatural energy. Thus panoplied, it is no longer a worm of the dust that contends with the legions of hell, but God through him; his arm is clothed with Divine strength, every nerve quivers with Divinity, every blow struck vibrates with omnipotence. It is only in the might of the Infinite that the soldier of Christ can prevail; but, then, it is *that* might which reared the universe, that upholds all things, and that could in a moment make the crash of worlds. The prince of darkness, though fallen, is still a mighty spirit; he is not alone, but, joined by all the forces of the empire he rules, he wars with sleepless malice against the sons of God. The conflict of faith is often severe; the pilgrim to glory "wrestles not against flesh and blood," not against the combination of strength from human beings frail as himself, but against evil spirits warring through various instrumentalities — "against principalities and powers;" those spiritual powers allied with all the forces of evil against heaven and its subjects and heirs. The apostle analyzes the kingdom of Satan. As there are different orders in the celestial hierarchy, so there are distinct grades in the fallen spiritual world. There are good archangels; but, also, archdevils, spirits of larger capacities and more destructive influence than others. As we have already considered the nature and resources of this kingdom, it is sufficiently manifest why we should be strong in the Lord; *i. e.* cultivate that intimate vital union with Jesus Christ, through which we obtain those inflows of Divine grace and

strength, that are indispensable to the vanquishment of the world and the devil. "Our help is in the Lord who made the heaven and the earth." Deriving our strength from our Almighty Saviour, we may successfully withstand those assaults that are made against the stability of the Christian's faith. "When I am weak," said the great apostle, "then am I strong." That is, when distrustful of myself, amid my conscious feebleness I cling to Christ and His cross, and, therefore, am strong, because linked with the source of all power. "I can do all things through Christ strengthening me." What a noble spectacle does the believer, clothed in the armor of God, offer to angels! When the apostle wrote the Epistle to the Ephesians, he had daily opportunity of seeing the Prætoorean guards, and doubtless drew this image of Christian armor from that worn by the soldiers of Rome. The armor is defensive and offensive. As the soldier was girded about his waist, to keep his armor from becoming entangled with his garments, so the Christian must have his loins girt about with truth. The signification is twofold: first, it implies an unswerving adherence to the great principles of truth for which he contends, encompassed by truth, so that all his utterances are in accordance with the laws of the universe; secondly, it images that sincerity which must be characteristic of every true Christian. Without sincerity in God's service, all pretensions to piety, or forms of devotion, are hypocritical. "If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me." "Thou desirest truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden parts thou shalt make me to know wisdom." Truth will triumph over error.

The champions of the cause of truth may in themselves be feeble, inexperienced, and unskilled in the use of their weapons; but there is an invisible power connected with its utterances or efforts, which will triumph over the disciplined forces of error. There are frequently found on the side of infidelity and error, men of strong, clear intellects, wielding the weapons of argument with consummate skill and tremendous energy. Men who appear for a season to strike down the noblest monuments of religion, and seem to shake the very foundations of all religious systems; but such are often confounded and overwhelmed, by a pious child unconsciously uttering words that prove terrific thunderbolts of heaven, whereby the citadel of error is shattered and laid into a heap of ruins. The taunting Goliaths defying the hosts of God in the present day, find "in babes and sucklings" the chosen instruments of their discomfiture, the little Davids, who hurl with deadly force, stones gathered from those brooks which make glad the city of God.

Another part of the armor recommended for this warfare is righteousness as a breastplate. This in ancient times was intended to protect the vital organs of the system. The righteousness of Jesus shields us from Divine wrath, and constitutes an impregnable bulwark about our hearts, against the accusations and shafts of the enemy. In another epistle we are exhorted "to put on the breastplate of faith and love." Faith and love stand as representatives of all the Christian graces; for, where they exist in a healthy and vigorous condition, they will produce all the excellencies that jewel the matured Christian character. "And

your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel." Soldiers were accustomed to wear shoes with brazen or other metallic bands, or greaves, intended to protect their feet from the snares of the enemy. This "preparation," unquestionably points to that firmness of mind and resolvedness of the heart with which all those whose aspirations are tending to a glorious immortality, adhere to and abide with the gospel. It indicates, moreover, that moral courage displayed by the Christian hero who carries out the high and holy impulses of his heart. The Christian is no coward; he is brave and chivalrous, despising dangers, and pressing forward through the most formidable perils towards a fadeless crown. The exertions of the Christian soldier are often sublime, and put to shame the proud military hero, who, borne on a wave of excitement, through scenes of carnage, knows nothing of the heroism that withstands and fights the devil. How often, in those days over which the pall of persecution and martyrdom was spread, has feeble woman risen to such a sublime elevation of faith, that she could smile at the instruments of the most terrible torture, and maintain the loftiest bearing amid devouring flames!

"The shield of faith" is the next species of armor mentioned. The shield had important uses: fastened upon the arm, it could be turned in every direction to ward off the shafts of the enemy, and thus become a defence for the whole body. The wicked one casts his fiery darts, *i. e.* suggests wicked thoughts; faith in Christ destroys them. The ancients sometimes bound about their arrows combustible materials and sent them flaming on their fatal mission; these were rendered

harmless and extinguished, when caught by the shields made of green hides. The helmet was worn upon the head, and so firmly was it fixed on that it would resist the flying shaft or the descending sword. The helmet of salvation is hope. Hope of eternal life, or Christ in us the hope of glory. There is not a more energizing element in the Christian character than hope. Well grounded and rooted in the atonement, it anticipates things not seen. It brings to the heart a realization of the glorious realities of eternity. It is as an anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast. It delivers the soul from doubts and torments, bears it up on its strong pinions far above the vanities and vexations of this world, to mingle in the exalted services of the sparkling multitude about the eternal throne, and filling the heart unutterably full of glory.

Thus panoplied the Christian warrior is prepared to withstand the onsets and shocks of the kingdom of darkness. But it is not enough to stand fast against the opposing powers of evil; his mission calls for efforts to subvert the empire of darkness. Christianity is aggressive, upon its unfurled banner it is written in characters of blood—"I come to destroy the works of the devil." The hosts of God are led forth to battle; they are to reclaim this revolted province to its rightful Sovereign. The war waged against the powers of evil is a war of extermination. The Redeemer of man has purchased this world with His blood. The Father has given to Him, "The heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession." But this vast territory is to a large extent covered with the gloom of death, it groans under the domination of

that terrible power that was against the Son of God. Light and darkness are now in conflict, and, whenever a heart is won by the Saviour of men, that heart thrills with a holy zeal to break the thralldom of this earth. In view of accomplishing the conquest of the world through the power of the cross, the apostle adds another weapon to complete the Christian armor, when he says, "and the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God." This sword, properly wielded, may do terrible execution. A firm hand and prayerful heart will make the individual instrumental in delivering souls from Satan's power, and setting up in their hearts the kingdom of heaven. A father or mother may so impart Divine truth to children as will emancipate them from the bondage of corruption, and translate them into the liberty of God's children. His neighbors and friends may be saved by his efforts, if joined with fervent, believing prayer. The Christian should imitate the example of the Israelite, in wielding the sword against the enemy while he plies heaven with supplications for help and success. Thus fighting, he shall surely triumph.

But the principle which I have been endeavoring to enforce in relation to the Israelite and the Christian, applies with equal force to these pilgrims in a collective capacity. The army under the leadership of Joshua was governed by the same rule; it was not merely in single combat that they were to encounter the Amalekites, but, army against army, nation opposed to nation. The Christian church hopes to conquer the kingdom of darkness. This is a fixed conviction in the minds of all believers. It is suggested by the very

structure of Christianity, by the adaptedness of the gospel to the wants and woes of humanity—it is based upon the utterances of immutable truth. Prophets have pictured in glowing aspects the universal triumph of the Redeemer's kingdom as its sublime destiny. The declarations of Jesus are in harmony with those predictions, that look to the conquest of the world by the power of the cross. This is one of those magnificent hopes that flashes to the eye of faith in the gospel firmament, while it sends its inspirations through the army of the living God. Granted, that these prophecies and promises rest on certain conditions, which must be observed if these expectations are to issue in realizations. As the great body of Christians understand these, and act in conformity with them, the empire of truth will enlarge its circle, until its dominion "stretches from sea to sea, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth." The elements upon which the successful issue of this conflict depends, are unity, purity, stability, and prayerful exertion. Among the last prayers offered by our Lord for His church, He uttered that sublime petition—"Holy Father, keep them that they may be one, as we are." He left it as the distinguishing badge of discipleship that they should love one another. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another." Members of the same household, they must cherish each other as servants of the same master, as children of the same parent. Unity of spirit, unity of design, and unity of exertion, invest the church with an energy that prostrates everything that exalts itself against the cause of truth.

Alas! how have those mistaken the spirit and mis-

sion of Christianity, who labor for the building up of a denomination instead of the kingdom of Christ! They pervert their energies, and prostitute their talents to a base purpose, who war against the children of the same Father, and cherish no fraternal feelings towards Christians of another name, but cast them beyond the pale of the covenanted mercies of God. They are little, narrow-minded souls, who can see no vein of gold in other systems, and arrogate to their own creed all the wealth of Divine truth. The Master rebuked this spirit in His disciples, who, with their imperfect apprehensions of the mysteries of his kingdom, said: "Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, beyond Jordan, who follows not with us, and we forbade him." What officious meddlers! to forbid such a benevolent act, and what a just rebuke! "Let him alone, he that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad." He is occupied in the same work, warring against our common enemy the devil, let him do it. Thus it must ever be with us, for: "What is Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, are not all the servants of Christ?" Under whatever party banner they may fight, so that it has the emblem of Calvary, we bid them a God-speed. A lofty mind cannot be sectarian, a noble intellect scorns those little artful tricks of the wily proselytist. There is no benevolence, no piety, no Christ in such a business. From the radiant summit of that mount of spiritual excellence, where it is the privilege of the faithful to stand, they behold, with emotions of joy, the different Christian squadrons of God's army contending with the forces of the devil; they pray for success,

and with all the ardor of their souls send forth the shout of victory as they see the powers of sin giving way to the forces of light. Thus, in the language of Paul, "striving together for the gospel," we will come off conquerors. Millions are now before God's throne who secured the victory over sin and death. They are clothed in robes of white, bearing palms of victory, and harping the praises of Him who made them to triumph over all their spiritual foes. Blessed be God! the throne of iniquity is already tottering to its foundations, it will fall. Though Amalek is still in the field, the soldiers of Christ have penetrated his empires, they are stationed all over the world, they have besieged the strong holds of darkness, light is flashing amid the habitations of cruelty, the Church's glory gleams far and wide, while Aarons and Hurs are everywhere holding up the hands of those whose prayers ascend to the God of battles. Hasten, O God! the latter day of glory! Soldiers of Christ press on to victory and conquest! Behold the prize for which we contend! the redemption of the world, the salvation of souls! We strike for the deliverance of this anguished creation, we labor to restore this earth to its rightful sovereign, to remove the dreadful curse that blighted Paradise and filled the world with woes. The captain of our salvation is already in the field: "And I saw, and behold a white horse, and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer." Let us fight the good fight of faith; under such a leader who would falter? with such resources as we find in Jehovah victory is certain. Let prayer be

joined to our exertions, and we shall succeed. We *must* fight—our personal salvation demands it, the glory of Jesus requires it. The Israelite vanquished Amalek, the Christian shall as surely vanquish Satan. Let us contend in sight of the fadeless crown, in the light of the eternal throne! Our home is in heaven—Canaan rises to our view flashing with the splendor of ten thousand suns; arise, to arms, and onward, ye redeemed, shouting Christ and glory!

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CHAPTER XVIII.

JETHRO REJOICING OVER THE DELIVERANCE OF ISRAEL;
OR, THE JOY ARISING FROM THE CONVERSION OF
RELATIVES AND FRIENDS TO GOD.

Read Exodus xviii. 9-13.

THE beauty of the Lord our God is upon all things. The outspread universe, glowing in its gorgeous drapery of light, and vocal with lofty strains of melody, has no object within its vast range that has not enstamped upon it an image of the Divine loveliness. Not a sun, but it streams with the reflected glory of its God; not a star, but it beams with Divine love; there is nothing within the charming circle of creation, that does not proclaim the exalted excellence of the infinitely-glorious Sovereign. It is written — “God is love.” “God is love;” so says this beautiful morning, while every descending beam writes the lesson upon the tablets of nature. That wonderful organism, whose mysterious energies are now clothing the landscape in its bridal robes, and decorating hill and dale with a wealth of beauty, utters, with a thousand tongues, “God is love.” The warbling brook, the broad, flowing river, and the majestic ocean, in their varied utterances, proclaim the same message. “God is love,” rises from countless creatures, rejoicing amid the profusions of the Divine bounty. “God is love,”

flows from those blending harmonies, whose vast circle comprehends the imperceptible breathings of the insect, the carolling of the choristers of the air, the noble accents of human tongues, and the glorious utterances from the shrines of nature, ascending in one grand anthem to heaven, and blending with the offerings of praise poured around the Eternal throne !

Is God's goodness imaged only on the physical aspect of the great theatre of nature ? upon this earth, and the outstretched heavens ? Ah ! no ; it shines with equal splendor in the firmament of this moral world. It is visible in that social structure which He has ordained for our race, in the relations which He established between the members of the human family, and in all the hopes that animate, and the joys that delight human souls. The love of our beneficent Creator presents no richer illustrations of its excellence, than in those sympathies which He kindled in our bosoms ; nowhere does it evoke holier raptures, than those that warm the heart within the circles of holy friendships and happy homes. You are a parent ; around you are grouped throbbing youthful hearts, pouring the wealth of pure affection on the family shrine. Are they, with you, treading the road to endless glory ? Oh ! then will you enter into the spirit of this narrative ; you will understand the joy of Jethro. You will join in his rejoicing, and say — Blessed be the Lord, who has delivered you, my children, out of the hand of our great enemy, who seeks to ruin immortal souls.

The mission upon which Moses went forth from the seclusions of Horeb, was of such a character that it

was necessary for him to leave his family under the protection of his father-in-law. To bring the Israelites out of Egypt was an enterprise as perilous as it was difficult, and the magnitude and complicated nature of his work demanded an undivided application of his energies, and entire freedom from domestic cares. When Jethro heard of Israel's deliverance and escape from the power of Pharaoh, he took the wife and children of his son-in-law and hastened to Moses. Their interview is here recorded. It is invested with a touching interest. The emancipation of the Hebrews from Egyptian bondage was doubtless the frequent topic of discussion during the residence of Moses with Jethro. That he instructed his father-in-law in the true religion, and unfolded to him the character and attributes of Israel's God, is manifest from the language of Jethro on this occasion. "Now I know," said he, "that the Lord is greater than all gods." He was deeply affected by the recital of those scenes through which the Hebrews had passed. What a graphic picture would such a mind as Moses' sketch, with such extraordinary materials as composed his adventures from the time he left the solitudes of Horeb up to the period when he erected that altar in Rephidim, upon which was inscribed the significant motto, "Jehovah Nissi!" His interview with the haughty monarch, with his brethren, the miracles wrought, the Nile flowing with blood, the clouds of locusts, the hail, the thunder, the fire which ran along the earth, closing with the last terrible night, when the death-wail rose in mournful accents all over Egypt; then the flight and pursuit, the consternation at the sea, its passage,

the mysterious fire-pillar that shot gleams of dismay into the hosts of the enemy, their journey, with its marvellous incidents; all these, grouped in their appropriate positions, and clothed with that freshness which the recency of their occurrence would impart; such a portraiture, from such a mind, was eminently fitted to produce a deep impression upon the heart of Jethro. That the profound sources of his being were stirred, is manifest from this outburst of gratitude and praise. "And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel." "And said, blessed be the Lord, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods. And he took a burnt-offering and sacrifices for God; and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God."

This touching narrative, depicting the emotions of delight with which the Midianite contemplated the happy deliverance of Israel, indicates, in a very forcible light, the joy experienced when those joined to us by the ties of consanguinity are delivered from the dominion of Satan, and guided into that path which leads to the land of rest. When a human being escapes some impending calamity, our hearts are conscious of an involuntary thrill of joy. A family is snatched, by an invisible hand, from the disastrous sweep of a wide-circling calamity, and we utter songs of praise. It was night, and the storm howled wildly and mournfully over the city. Thick masses of dark clouds rolled up in dread array. The thunder, that had so long uttered its fearful rumbling monitions in the dis-

tance, had now marshalled its forces above, gleams of fire illumined the darkness, the vivid flash and sharp peal startled us ; then came the terrific crash, and we were laid prostrate, insensible. Startled by a piercing cry, we beheld, just opposite, the home of cherished friends in flames. Sensations of terror fell cold upon our minds ; a sickening faintness seized upon our hearts. But, roused by the appalling spectacle, we rushed to the deliverance of the affrighted inmates of the burning structure. They flew to the windows, and from room to room, until they reached the roof, where, with uplifted hands to heaven, and imploring looks to the crowd, they cried for help. There was the rushing of the multitude to their rescue, there were daring exertions, a family was saved, and the heroic efforts that rescued them were heralded through the world. But who may describe the emotions of our hearts while locked in the embraces of those snatched from the devouring flame ! Who can measure the depth of that joy, which heart pulsated to heart ! And yet no earthly peril is so appalling as that to which the impenitent sinner is exposed ; and, therefore, no earthly joy so intense and exalted as that which we realize when some cherished one flees the wrath which is to come. Souls unpardoned are every moment in danger of dropping into a world of fire. The frail structure in which the unsanctified spirit dwells is already yielding ; the storms that beat about it shake it to its foundation ; a few more shocks, and it will fall into a heap of ruins. Beholding immortal spirits amid such imminent perils, we sound the alarm ; the thunders of a violated law break upon their ears, the light of God's

Spirit flashes in steady gleams over those ready to perish, the efforts of affection join themselves to the arm that saves to the uttermost; they are awakened to behold their condition, they see their danger, they lay hold on the hope set before them in the gospel, they fly to Christ, and are saved. What ecstatic raptures vibrate through the joyful spirit, when a child, a companion, a friend, or a parent, becomes the subject of Divine grace, and a hopeful heir of heaven. Our exalted Redeemer, in some of his inimitable parables, has most touchingly illustrated the heavenly solicitude for the wanderers from peace, and the rejoicings which their salvation awakens in the world of glory. A shepherd has a fold of an hundred sheep; one strays into the wilderness where beasts of prey reside. He hastens after it, and after painful anxieties and laborious search, apprehends the wanderer, but so feeble and exhausted that it cannot return in its own strength; he lays it upon his shoulder, and bears it back to the fold, and rejoices over the recovered one more than over the ninety and nine which were not exposed to danger. "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of God when one sinner repenteth, more than over ninety and nine which need no repentance." The same truth is presented in that universally-admired family scene of the father and his two sons. The parable of the prodigal son breathes a stirring pathos, and uncovers the mysterious workings of the human heart, when laboring most intensely with contending emotions. Although the scene of rejoicing is pictured as taking place in the presence of God and his holy ones, there is a similar experience enacted in

every pious circle on earth, as often as one of its cherished members returns into covenant relations with God.

A few years ago there was an extensive revival of religion in one of the larger inland towns of Pennsylvania, and many yielded to the claims of God. The work of grace was particularly effectual among the young; many remembered their Creator, and covenanted with Him. While heart after heart was pouring out its affections at the feet of the Saviour, a young man remained obdurately wicked. The quickening dews of grace won from heaven by fervent prayer, fell not with softening power on his heart. Maternal tenderness poured its earnest petitions on God's altar for an only son, while all the appliances of grace bore with Divine energy upon the mind of that youth, and yet was he insensible to all appeals. The spectacle became too painful for the mother; she ceased meeting with the praying circle, that she might wrestle alone with God. And, behold! while laboring in her closet with heaven, she was sought, and the tidings of her son's conversion were mingled with the low breathings of this suppliant mother; a gushing flood of joy drowned her consciousness, as she articulated — "Oh! Jesus, it is enough, he lives!"

The joy occasioned by the conversion of relatives and friends, is eminently natural and reasonable. It is not constrained, nor affected, it is spontaneous and real. It has its origin in a correct view of the Divine government, and in a true perception of human accountability and the soul's nature and destiny. A scriptural knowledge of God's character must fill the

pious soul with painful apprehensions for the everlasting welfare of those who are linked in intimate relationship with it; and when they are brought from darkness to light, and receive evidence of their adoption into God's family, their friends share in their exultations amid the dawning glories of their altered destiny. Having become "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ," they are now toiling together towards an immortality radiant with glory. A rightly constituted heart, when renewed by grace, is elevated in its sympathies and feelings; and, therefore, spontaneously pours out its joyous emotions as a full fountain does its waters, when those enshrined in its affections have their names written in the book of life. This joy springs out of the holiest depths of a sanctified nature; thence it flows forth in glorious streams of delight.

It is an exalted joy! not occasioned by a trivial worldly object, by a successful adventure, or the attainment of an earthly good, but it springs from the securing of a priceless treasure. It rises with the dignity and value of the soul; it ascends to a just comprehension of those immense interests, involved in the rescue of a deathless spirit from the power of the great destroyer. Bunyan has beautifully described the entrance of the Christian on the road to life; and yet more touchingly has he pictured the reunion with Christiana and the children, after they had also set out for Mount Zion.

The joy of Christians over repenting sinners is not merely founded in sympathy, but, also, in philosophy; and is, therefore, eminently rational. The moral

position which the believer occupies, commands a view of all the great interests of the soul. He knows the great mission which every intelligent being is destined to fill, and, also, that the responsibilities clustering about it cannot be met while man lives in rebellion against God. The will of heaven is, that we should glorify the Lord in our bodies and spirits, while we are to be occupied in efforts to elevate the race and promote human happiness. But those living in sin are the enemies of Jehovah, warring against their own personal peace, and spreading disorder through society. It must, therefore, always be a source of gratulation when the energies of immortal minds are delivered from the crushing despotism of evil, and their strength consecrated to the cause of holiness. Thus employed, they live in harmony with the design of their creation; they no longer contravene the laws of their being, but live according to the high and holy impulses of conscience. The noblest contribution that man can make to society is virtue. The virtues he practises, and such as are evoked by his influence, are far more precious to the permanent interests of mankind than all the gold and gems of this world. It is, therefore, not merely in view of the improved prospects and changed condition of the converted, that the Christian rejoices; but, also, because the kingdom of heaven has received an accession of strength, and the world will reap a harvest of blessings. That renewed soul will form a centre of holy influences in a family circle; it will be a fountain of purity in a new home, whose streams will add beauty and strength to the social structure. The regeneration of one soul is

pregnant with immense consequences. It is the rising in earth's moral firmament of a new orb, whose path will be marked by a stream of light; and, as it moves on in its orbit, it will shed a heavenly radiance on dark and desolate hearts. It will make conquests for the Redeemer, by dispelling moral darkness and guiding souls to glory.

The family institution gives birth to intensely interesting relations. It binds in most intimate union kindred spirits, and, from this blending of souls, there spring our noblest earthly joys. Amid that circle of congenial spirits we taste a happiness found nowhere else. How natural is the desire to perpetuate the existence of that which affords us enjoyment! How reluctantly do we consent to a separation from those we love, when duty or death demands their surrender! What a sad melancholy gathers upon our spirits! what a gloom rests upon the mind when they are gone! But who could acquiesce in an eternal separation? The thought is appalling; the mere possibility chills the blood! Religion will immortalize those bonds that unite in holy love the pious members of the Christian household. Oh! as I look upon my beloved ones I rejoice that these endearments shall not perish; these voices that gladden our circle, and join in the hymn of praise, shall be heard in the music of heaven! These home-pleasures, these fond ties and friendships, shall live forever! sanctified, they shall rise to link themselves with eternity! These relations are impregnated by a lively faith with the elements of immortality; our noble boy, our first-born, is now before the

glorious throne;* and, we trust, through the riches of redeeming grace, to say in the last great day: "Here Lord are we, and those whom thou hast given us, and behold, none of us is lost!"

When the deliverance of beloved friends from the bondage of iniquity opens such prospects, it is fit that there should be appropriate acknowledgements of such distinguished mercy. As Jethro presented burnt-offerings to God as an expression of his gratitude for the deliverance of Israel, so should we offer sacrifices of thanksgiving, when beloved ones assume the costume and staff of the pilgrim to heaven. Let us not only commemorate the birth-day of our children into this world, but much more that day which made them heirs of a fadeless crown. The salvation of the Israelite from Egyptian bondage was a triumph of God over idols; the disenthralment of the sinner from the power of darkness, and his translation into the kingdom of heaven, is a victory of grace, to which the Christian should rear a memorial of praise, and inscribe on it the noble sentiment: "Jehovah Nissi" — The Lord our banner.

Jethro, and the elders of Israel, and the priests eat bread before the Lord, as a token of their joyful and signal deliverance; in like manner should the regenerated, those redeemed from sin, unite in the public celebration of the Lord's Supper. The eucharist was instituted, among other reasons, as a means of comfort and refreshment to the people of God. It is in the

* Lily Estelle, my beautiful and lovely child, now, as I am reading this proof, lies in the embraces of death.

most sublime sense, "eating bread before God." It is the bread of life. "The bread that we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ." The neglecters of this ordinance have either not experienced the *great deliverance*, are not partakers of the precious salvation, or they "despise the table of the Lord." It is a fearful thing to slight Jesus; to undervalue his death. Such occupy a position pregnant with danger, and appalling as to its guilt. "Do this in remembrance of me"—is a standing obligation upon all generations; it dare not be abrogated; it *must* endure with the church militant. The pilgrim to the Zion of the heavenly Canaan refreshes his weary spirit by this well of salvation, until he sits down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, yea, with all the redeemed, in the upper sanctuary, amid the glories of the New Jerusalem.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE GRANDEUR OF THE DIVINE LAW, AS PROCLAIMED ON SINAI, AS ILLUSTRATED ON CALVARY.

THE field of history, like the landscape, is diversified by objects more or less commanding in their aspect and magnitude; such as stand out prominently to the eye, though perhaps not more valuable in the estimation of their Maker than those of humbler appearance, yet to human apprehension they are invested with greater importance, forasmuch as they give birth to vaster results. Mountains that stand out upon the aspect of nature very conspicuously have, not unfrequently, linked with them events in the moral world of a corresponding magnitude. Sinai has become endowed with the immortality of that law which was proclaimed from its storm-capped and lurid brow. The giving of that moral code constitutes a memorable epoch in the history of the world. Even from the distance at which we behold it, its proclamation flashes with a fearful grandeur. When Moses was summoned into the mount, clouds gathered in dark masses upon its summit, and their gloomy folds lapped its sides. The mighty God, the everlasting Father and Maker of the Universe, speaks from His impenetrable pavilion in a voice of thunder, so that the rock-ribbed sides of the mountain quake with alarm, and every heart in the multitude quails with fear, in the presence of these

manifestations of Divine Majesty. The entire picture, as drawn by the pencil of inspiration, cannot be contemplated, even from our stand-point, without shedding a sense of awe over our sensibilities. Over against that scene of flame and thunder, at the distance of some thousand years, there stands another mountain, around which hearts are breaking and spirits trembling with rage; angels linger about the thrilling spectacle more agitated than when participating in the delivery of the law, while heaven bends in mute astonishment over that sublime, that terrific transaction. That mount is Calvary, and God is not there, uttering the fearful denunciation, "cursed is every one that continueth not, in all things written in the book of the law, to do them;" but is Himself become a victim, to bear the curse that was crushing our world to perdition. The thunders of Sinai are now echoed in the groans of Calvary, and its streams of wrathful fire are quenched in the flowing blood of the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world: the one is a monument of our condemnation—the other a trophy of our salvation. Let us linger awhile around this scene, looking alternately to the one and to the other, while, with the eye of faith, we can contemplate the Divine law as proclaimed on Sinai, and as it was illustrated and vindicated by the illustrious Sufferer on Calvary. On Sinai it was enacted under intensely-thrilling circumstances; the darkness, the fire, and the thunder, were heightened in their effect: on Calvary the honor of the Divine Government, and the majesty of that violated law, were vindicated in the vicarious sufferings of our Lord.

The theory of law presupposes its necessity; its existence justifies that presumption. Nothing could exist without law. An appropriate constitutional government, adapted to the nature of the object controlled, is absolutely essential to the well-being of it. The glorious Sovereign of the Universe is under the law of His infinite perfections: He cannot, and does not, act contrary to the attributes which make up His existence. Being perfectly holy, He cannot look upon sin with pleasure; neither can He, as an infinitely-benevolent being, consent to any thing that would contravene the law of love. The harmony of His own nature evolved itself in the universe of matter and of mind formed by Him. Before sin entered, that harmony pervaded his vast dominions; it still prevails among those creatures, and in those regions, unblighted by the fall. Heaven is under law; love governs throughout the empire of bliss; angelic minds and the spirits made perfect are conformed to the one Almighty Will, whose impulses all obey. Amid the transactions of that perfect world, and the blending glories of thousands of exalted intelligences, there is no confusion, no strife, no clashing. The various orders of the celestial hierarchy—cherubim and seraphim, principalities and powers—move amid the peerless splendor of that world, and perform their exalted functions in unbroken harmony. The same order and quiet beauty is witnessed throughout the material universe. No principle of rebellion has entered into those sublime creations, none has ever broken away from the restraints of those laws to which their Maker has subjected them—all obediently perform their revolutions; and, while they

proclaim the wisdom of Him who bade them rise, they blend their lofty harmonies, as they roll their perpetual round, in one grand anthem of praise to God, who rules over all. The same beautiful harmony is also witnessed in the operations of natural law, so that their products are always seasonable and appropriate.

Humanity has also its laws. These are as universal as they are commanding in their influence; they inflict their own penalties for every violation. All those which relate to material objects are known as natural laws. But free, rational, intelligences require a moral code for their government — a law that presents motives to the understanding of man, that will command the homage of his heart. The moral law is styled, by way of eminence, *the law*; the glory of God's moral universe lies enshrouded in its requirements. No well-constituted mind can subject it to a proper analysis without reaching the inevitable conclusion that it emanated from an infinitely-perfect Mind. The more thoroughly it is scrutinized, the more manifest will it become that it is holy, just in its demands, wise in its proposals, and benevolent in its tendencies. The grandeur of this law is seen —

In its sublime spirit. Perfectly free from all blemishes, it forms a singular contrast with human law. It has no selfishness in it, no imperfections are found in its structure: so elevated in its tone, that it breathes an authority which neither man, nor angel, dare dispute. In the absence of all other proof of the inspiration of the Bible, the decalogue itself would be amply sufficient to invest it with all the attributes of a superhuman production. Its spirit is purely benevo-

lent; for, while it contemplates the advancement of His glory, whose right it is to rule, it is eminently fitted to promote human happiness, alike by the restraints it imposes and the rewards of obedience which it offers. Its ultimate design is the restoration of the lost harmony of God's universe.

Its grandeur is manifest in its lofty precepts and just requirements. A distinguished jurist, who had been awakened to a sense of his sinfulness, patiently examined it for months, with the hope of finding some imperfection that might strip it of its divinity, and relieve him of his obligations; but he sought in vain. Nothing which might tend to the elevation and happiness of man was omitted, nothing could be added to improve, nor could he take anything from it without impairing its beauty, or detracting from its completeness; and, under a deep conviction of its heavenly origin, he bowed his once sceptical mind in homage to its Divinity. On the one hand, it covers the entire field of human duty; on the other, it guards the honor of the universal Sovereign. Its foundation is laid in the great truth of the existence and unity of one true God; and the consequent obligation (which takes its rise in this primal truth) of all men to love Him supremely, and to Him alone render their homage. The truthfulness of this first command is proclaimed by the monuments of his creative energies; and the justness of its requirement is sustained by our consciousness of the fitness of things. It lays its prohibition on the worship of idols, denounces that system of delusion which has rolled a crushing tide of woes over our disordered humanity. This law invests the name

of Jehovah with a sanctity that may not be invaded by profanity or irreverence. Profanity is not only an inexcusable vice, which gratifies no impulse of nature, but it is a stupendous folly, fitted only to degrade man, and work mischief in social life. A reverential bearing towards the Lord of all is the appropriate attitude of all dependent creatures. The decalogue gives and sanctifies the Sabbath. None but an infinite Mind could have conceived an institution so glorious in spiritual wealth, and so magnificent in its issues on human happiness. To our beloved land this day, with its appropriate influences, is the only impregnable bulwark of freedom, the only rock of our security. It is one of the richest legacies which a benevolent God could give to His weary and worn creatures.

The relations of life are also elevated and hallowed by this divine code. Nations living under the reign of idolatry justify the destruction of the infirm aged; but God requires of children honor to parents—enjoins filial affection, that beautiful bond which causes the child to cling with unabated love to decrepitude and old age. It sacredly guards human life; forbids all injury to our neighbor in person or estate. It sanctifies the marriage relation, and makes the family a tower of strength and a fountain of blessing. It cherishes the interests of social life, by inculcating the right of property and forbidding violence and fraud. It enjoins truth, forbids covetousness; it lays its hand upon every stirring corruption, and says, thou shalt not, and holds up a crown of glory before every good impulse in our nature, as the reward of obedience. As summed up by our Lord—Hear, O! Israel, “Thou

shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself." When this law shall be universally obeyed it will fill the earth with peace, and cover the universe with that excellent glory with which it shone before the fall of Adam.

Its elevated purity and its spirituality are also characteristics that clothe it in a lofty grandeur. Absolutely holy, it requires perfect obedience. It lays its claims upon the outward and the inner man. It goes to the springs of human action; it takes cognizance of the thoughts and intents of the heart, and, by bringing them into subjection to its authority, the life is moulded into conformity to the will of God.

Its extent is of an equally imposing character. "I have seen," said the Psalmist, "an end of all perfection, but Thy commandment is exceeding broad." Great good may be accomplished by judicious rulers, in the enactment of wise and just laws. It is not a boast, founded in ignorance, that is sometimes made relative to the beneficial effects of our laws. The happy millions living under the protection of the best constituted government on the globe ought to rejoice. Yet, no one would presume to affirm that ours is a perfect government. There are many imperfections, that the light of experience will remove, and change or modify. But, here we have a law so admirably wise in its provisions, so conversant with the wants of man, and so well adapted its to end, that it admits of no change. Age or climate do not impair it. It covers the whole race with its requirements. It embraces within the compass of its authority the African and

the European, the Asiatic and the American; all the kindreds of earth are subject to its claims; to all it offers the same motives of obedience. It extends onward over all coming ages, and is destined to shed over our world's history the glory of its Author.

But the consummation and climax of its grandeur is visible in *the sacrificial immolation of JESUS ON CALVARY*. Its divine Author there expiated the offences of man against the law of God. To inflict its dreadful penalties on the only begotten and well beloved Son, as He was shrouded in our humanity, was the noblest vindication of its honor and the majesty of its authority. God spared not His own Son when He stood in the room of sinners. What were the scenes of Sinai when compared with the transactions of Calvary! The mount of the desert was flaming with a terrific grandeur—the awful grandeur of Almighty God; and the law was proclaimed amid those symbols of divine wrath, that it might hold in check the turbulent passions of mankind. But on the latter mount there was witnessed a sublimer spectacle; the Creator of the universe, the Redeemer of man, enduring the dread penalties of that law. “He made His soul an offering for sin.” “The Lord laid upon him the iniquity of us all.” Around that cross on which Immanuel bled there was gathered a storm of wrath, that would have poured its torrents of fire upon man through all eternity, had not the Holy One received it into His bosom. On His head burst all the threatenings of God against sinners, in all their appalling weight. If the spectacle of the quaking Sinai filled the people with alarm, the scenes of Cal-

vary sent a thrill of horror through the universe. His sufferings were intense — transcending the conceptions of created mind, filling with amazement even the Redeemer himself, as He uttered that piercing cry, “My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?” His groans were more potent than the thunders of Sinai, for they shook the earth, rent the rocks, and threw creation into paroxysms of anguish. It was an event that sent a quivering sensation of terror through the framework of the universe, and whose undulations vibrated even to the throne of Jehovah, while it spread a covering of darkness over the firmament, obscuring the sun, and veiling the earth in a sheet of gloom; an event which will forever stand unrivalled and alone in its sublime grandeur! Here let us wonder and adore! As pilgrims, let us often contemplate the mount crimsoned with Divine blood. “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of my Lord Jesus Christ.” That cross is the sign by which we conquer. In our past history it gleams as the mount of refuge, to which we fled and found shelter. In the present, it is the source of our consolation, the nourisher of our hope; and, by the light of its glory now issuing on our path, we will pursue our journey towards the everlasting Canaan, singing, as we proceed —

“Guide me, O! thou great Jehovah,
 Pilgrim through this barren land;
 I am weak, but thou art mighty,
 Hold me by thy powerful hand.
 Bread of heaven
 Feed me till I want no more.”

CHAPTER XX.

THE RULE OF LIFE FOR PILGRIMS, AS UNFOLDED IN
THE ISRAELITE, AND ILLUSTRATED BY THE CHRIS-
TIAN.

“Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am Holy.”

EXODUS.

THIS requirement occupies a central position in that code of social, civil, and religious laws, which God ordained for the government of his spiritual commonwealth. The pilgrim to the celestial Zion may peruse, with interest and profit, the twenty-first, second, and third chapters of the book of Exodus. While some of the regulations instituted for Israel are not strictly applicable to society in its present organization, the general principles which pervade the provisions in the Mosaic economy are founded on natural and moral right, and therefore must remain in force to the end of time. Whatever changes the lapse of centuries may have wrought, human nature has not improved in its constitutional elements; it is agitated by the same passions, and within it are the stirrings of the same rebellious principles so often exhibited by the Hebrews; so that, all the checks and guiding influences required three thousand years ago, to conduct man to that moral elevation where he enjoys communion with God, are now needed. The human family is fallen; corrupt in heart, and with perverted minds, they will walk in

the broad road to death, as certainly as the water flows to the ocean. Notwithstanding the presumption of the school of Emerson, who deny the existence of evil, such is the force of human depravity, that no created power can hold back from the bottomless abyss this rushing tide of souls. No earthly motives can stay their progress, nor avert their affections from those objects on which they build their hopes of happiness, but with which they will finally perish. Such has always been the unhappy condition of this world of sinners; destitute of strength, they were powerless; and without pity they would rather destroy each other, than, by a combination of energy, attempt their deliverance from oppressive burdens. "But when, there was no eye to pity, and no arm to save, God laid help upon one who was mighty to save, even to the uttermost, all that came unto God through him." To save our race from the pangs of eternal death, was "no afterthought" of Deity.

"For in the councils of Almighty Grace,
Thy Priesthood, oh, Incarnate! was designed;
Before creation out of nothing sprang."

After mankind had sinned, and corrupted their way, the energies of the Divine Mind were directed to the securing of their salvation. To save them, and to make them partners of His throne, they must be holy. A holy Sovereign cannot admit to the fellowship of a holy Heaven, souls tarnished by sin. Spotless Himself, all who minister in His august presence, must be cleansed from all unrighteousness. Wherefore, we have not only the requirements, "Ye shall be holy men

unto me,"—"Be ye holy, for I the Lord your God am holy,"—but the instrumentalities ordained of Heaven for our recovery from the dominion of sin are holy, and fitted to make those holy upon whose natures they breathe their renewing power. This idea was constantly kept before the minds of God's chosen people. It was proclaimed by the law and the prophets, taught by their ceremonies, and enforced by the various aspects in which the Divine Being manifested himself to them. The holiness of the people is associated with the most distinguished blessings Providence could bestow; and their sinfulness linked with personal and national calamities. The same idea is made prominent throughout the Bible.

The sermon on the mount glows with holiness. What sublime purity, what disinterested love, are breathed in that matchless discourse! How beautiful the exhibitions of the Divine perfections! how incomparable the glory with which the holiness of the preacher invested those lessons of wisdom! How charming the image He draws of that sleepless Providence, whose overshadowing wings shelter the evil and the good, and whose wealth of goodness is poured upon the just and the unjust! What an example for our imitation He holds up, when He bids us—"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." There cannot be even the most distant approximation to the dealings of God, unless man has a holy heart.

To elevate the individual or the race to that standard of purity, where there is communion with God established, there must be holy principles laid at the foundations of society, and incorporated into the frame-

work of the social, civil, and religious structure; and these must be left to act freely, without obstruction; for then only can the energy with which they are endowed achieve the exalted result. The God of Israel gave them such a code of laws, to control them in the several relations of life, as would promote their growth in moral excellence, and ultimately fit them for a cloudless immortality. The style of character which those rules were intended to produce, and which is absolutely essential to national prosperity, to the present and future well being of the soul, could only be wrought out by patient effort, by an indomitable will, and by a holy heart. The immutability of God on the one hand, and the disorders and weaknesses that have always existed, and are still present in human nature, on the other, require the same course of moral discipline for pilgrims, in their progress to the heavenly Canaan, as that known in the ages anterior to the gospel dispensation. The rule of our life contains our hopes, our characters, and our destiny. The intelligent eye may read in national, as well as in individual, history, its results in those elementary principles of government which contain the germs of social, civil, and religious glory or degradation. With the aid of the microscope, we may behold in the germ a full portrait of the oak; and in like manner is the destiny of man present to the eye of the Infinite One, in those formative elements which will make up the sum of his character. The early motions and tendencies of the child are prophetic of the man. What, then, are the principles which should regulate our conduct as expectants of heaven? The importance of this question it is impos-

sible to overrate, and the correct solution and application thereof is infinitely momentous to us.

The rules of life appropriate to an immortal being while on his pilgrimage through this world, include all that are absolutely necessary to the product of HOLINESS. "Without holiness no one shall see the Lord." The great interests of man lie beyond the grave. He is born for glory, but it is immortal glory for which he is destined and for which his capacities fit him. Born into this world destitute of that purity which is a condition of everlasting life, his infancy should have applied to it those renewing agencies that are to qualify him for everlasting felicity. The ideas which control the lives of social beings are of slow growth, but, when once rooted in the soul, are as difficult to change. Even where the admission is freely granted, that the modes of thought and the reigning principles of action of a community are greatly vitiated or decidedly perverted, it is almost impossible to obtain the consent of those interested in the reformation of manners, for the abandonment of the ruling habits, or the substitution of other ideas conformed to the will of God and fitted to promote human happiness. The only remedy, where the malady in the social system is aggravated and of long standing, is to apply our correctives to the young, or, if it is the individual that is to be reformed, to rear a new moral structure. A good character and glorious hopes demand a sound foundation, no less than the stately edifice that towers in strength and majesty towards heaven. All preaching is vain, and its effects worse than vain, so long as men will not give up bad principles for holy ones, and so long as they prefer

corrupt hearts to pure ones. To comfort with words of hope, to build up with Christian consolation, persons who are delinquent in their social duties, among whom truth is crucified, integrity cast out of the heart, and evil in every form is permitted to revel in the breast and flow through the channels of life, is to help them forward to death and damnation. The opinion so widely entertained by individuals, that a few things that look towards virtue, or one or more splendid charities, will atone for a multitude of sins, is a most fatal delusion. Because men honor the sanctuary with their occasional presence, though they have not taken the first step in the way of salvation, they are sometimes addressed as though they had been born of God; this is a perversion of the gospel, and a very sure way of destroying souls. There can be nothing more fatal to the interests of the gospel, than to lower its standard so as to accommodate it to the vicious and depraved. This is one mode of transforming the most exalted good into the greatest evil; it is turning honey into poison, and refreshing draughts into liquid fire. I tremble when my discourse is approved by the wicked. I question my faithfulness when I receive their commendation. Where a church becomes the refuge of those of easy virtue, where they can sit without having their consciences disturbed, and have all the outward show of doing homage to the Son of God, while they are the slaves of iniquity, such a sanctuary and such ministrations are a blighting curse to souls. A few sabbaths of faithful preaching would scatter them to the winds, and "the places that knew them would know them no more." The sanctuary, when

true to its mission, must remind men of the awful purity of heaven. "Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord." "The Lord is in his holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before him." It is a consecrated place, devoted to the service of the high God. Holy hands must minister at its altar; holy men should there bow in humble worship; holy hearts should offer the incense of prayer to the Holy One of Israel. Holiness should be inscribed upon all its services; holiness to the Lord on all worshipping souls.

The Hebrew commonwealth cherished those sentiments and ideas which the gospel unfolds, as the only appropriate rules for the government of man. They are in many respects a model to other people, and we may often recur with profit to the study of their internal religious and social regulations. With many in our day holiness is known only as an abstraction, an ideal, not a reality. Something which may be contemplated with emotions of pleasure, but which has no actual connection with the life. Something thought of now and then, but which enters not into daily life, nor influences the conduct. What a marvellous delusion, that such persons should yet hope to enter heaven! Singular infatuation, that they could persuade themselves that the soul can be acceptable to God without holiness! Can that God require of the present generation less than he did of those of whom He said, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people, zealous of good works"? Nay, He expects to be glorified in His saints. He still utters from His throne the stirring message—"What communion has light with darkness, or Christ with Belial?"

or what part he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate [from sinners], saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you; and I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

The rules which were designed to control the conduct of the Israelite, in all the relations of life, are given in the ten commandments. All the other regulations instituted by the great Lawgiver are mere expositions of the decalogue, branches on the parent stem. The sum and substance of the moral law, as given by the Saviour, is supreme love to God and love to our fellow men. The apostle says, "Love is the fulfilling of the law." The Redeemer made it the great test of Christian discipleship. "Hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples, because ye love one another." In whatever heart this law acts efficiently, it will produce holiness. It begets justice, and this adorns the character with integrity, and clothes it with righteousness as a robe. It manifests itself in an honorable bearing towards competitors in trade, and induces man to shrink from the suggestions of avarice to take advantage of the ignorant in a commercial transaction, which in these days is a rare virtue. Love also makes the heart a fountain of kindness. How beautiful is that life which flows from a kind spirit! How radiant that path where remembrances of kind deeds and of friendly smiles flourish, where words of sympathy and hope have shed their fragrance upon the desponding and

sorrowful ! It makes families happy ; it sends sunshine into desolate homes ; it wakes melodies of joy in grief-stricken hearts ; and diffuses a quiet peace over the bosom of social life.

Truth is another offspring of the law of love. It assimilates to God, and, as we cannot cherish deception or practise falsehood while we love God, so the ever-present desire to please Him will make the life truthful. Yes, truth must constitute an influential element in the life of him who hopes for solid good on earth, and glorious rest in heaven. It must shine with an undimmed splendor through life. It governs the tongue, restraining it from giving utterance to malicious rumors. It will keep the "lips from speaking guile." The Christian pilgrim is truthful in his friendships, he never appears what he is not, he has no fellowship with liars ; he crawls not in the filth of public defamation, he has no ear for idle gossip. Borne on its strong pinions, he is carried forward in the race of life—the child of truth and the friend of uprightness. Truth—what strength and beauty it imparts to human character ! The man of truth is clothed in heaven's royal robe, and on his brow shines the signature of the eternal God. Within the circle of a small valley I found a people separated from a deceitful world ; an unblighted landscape gladdened by clear mountain streams and the blue heavens above : these images of the beautiful and true were reproduced in their minds, and their hearts glowed with the harmony and purity of the serene heavens and the quiet earth. It was pleasant to dwell there ; and angels, on errands of mercy, would pause enchanted over that circle of loyal

hearts, for every man spake truth to his brother. Over against that scene of purity and peace, those same ministers of mercy hang silently and mournfully around a place where deceit and guile are crucifying truth; and tongues, set on fire of hell, are consuming the innocent with their fiery lava: they shudder, they weep, and pass on.

And, finally, charity, which is the bond of perfectness, enters into the springs of all his actions. The pilgrim, thus attired, clothed with all the graces of religion, attains that degree of holiness which makes him the beloved of heaven. Holiness, in its most elevated form, is rarely attained by man. He may be eminent for some particular virtues, but these may be associated with marked delinquencies. The holiness which God requires in human beings, implies a completeness of moral excellence that embraces the entire life. There is but one man whom God pronounced perfect, *i. e.*, who had risen to that high moral elevation, where every part of his character was filled out after the Divine model, and that man was Job. That his life was made up of the most exalted virtues, we may infer from his own description of it, given in that deeply-touching discourse in which he mourns his lost prosperity: "O that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me. When his candle shined upon my head, and when by his *light* I walked *through* darkness. As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle. When the Almighty was yet with me, and my children were about me." A picture of most intimate communion with the Holy One. And this internal reli-

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gious life so ruled and guided all the powers and faculties of his being, as to produce an outward life that was in beautiful harmony with the hidden life with God. His holiness of character won the esteem of his fellow-men, and inspired them with reverence for his virtues. When he went out of the city, and prepared his seat as a judicial officer: "The young men saw me and hid themselves, and the aged arose and stood up. The princes refrained talking, the nobles held their peace; when the ear heard me, then it blessed me; when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me. Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness and it clothed me, my judgment was as a robe and diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. My root was spread out by the waters, and the dew lay all night on my branch. My glory was fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hand."

This is, without doubt, a picture of the most exalted happiness and prosperity ever offered to the consideration of the world. What a tender description of his fellowship with heaven! How glorious that righteousness which clothed him, and that judgment which was as a robe and diadem! No pencil could paint a loftier image of peaceful prosperity than that imaged in the words: "My root was spread out by the waters, and the dew lay all night upon my branch."

Beautiful as his life was with virtues, glowing as it did with holiness, it was all produced by that Divine

energy imparted to his being by the love he cherished for God ; it is, therefore, not impossible for man to rise to that exalted spiritual excellence at the present day. Nay, the Heavenly pilgrim, really and truly so, will and must put on holiness as his daily robe. If true to his soul, to his mission, and to his God, his life will be one of benevolence, filled with the fruits of righteousness. Whether he is blest with earthly prosperity, or labors under dark adversities, his spirit must be robed in the righteousness of Christ. For this, nothing can answer as a substitute ; he knows that his vocation is high and holy, that heaven and its occupants are holy, that He who has called him is holy, and commands him, as he passes forward : "Be ye holy, for I the Lord your God am holy." O Thou ! eternal spirit of Holiness, kindle thy sacred fires on every heart-altar, that our sins and infirmities may be consumed, that not only our souls, but that all the earth may become holy. Make holiness the garment of every pilgrim, the light and hope of every traveller to the eternal Canaan. Inscribe upon our hearts, upon every emotion, thought, purpose and act : "Holiness unto the Lord." Beautiful badge, glorious vesture of my God, clothe my soul, that labors to rise from this earth, that it may soar to Thy bosom, that I may be like Thee, my Redeemer and my God ! that I may be holy !

CHAPTER XXI.

THE OFFERINGS DUE TO GOD FROM PILGRIMS, AS ACKNOWLEDGMENTS OF THEIR DEPENDENCE; AND TESTIMONIALS OF THEIR GRATITUDE.

THERE are certain great principles that pervade the divine government. Many of these are distinctly exhibited and illustrated in the operations of the material universe. Among them we recognise a mutual dependency, as a marked and benevolent feature in God's plan of governing the world. There is a beautiful connection between the higher and lower orders of being; between the greater and smaller creations of Infinite power; and in these distinct orders a similar dependence of the various members upon each other. This relationship could not be destroyed without spreading disastrous ruin over the entire work. This unity gives rise to a law of benevolence, that diffuses its benefits over all the kingdoms of nature. The heavenly bodies have been kindled that they may illumine immensity with their cheerful light. The clouds are freighted with their precious treasures from the sea, that they may empty their genial showers upon the thirsty plain; and the earth in turn yields her fruits, to nourish every living thing. All things pay tribute for benefits received. In all the vegetable and animal kingdoms, there is no beast, nor bird, nor plant, nor flower, that exists only for itself—but for the good of all, of which it forms a part. However far

philosophers may push their inquiries into the several departments of Nature, there never has been, there never will be, found within the circle of human knowledge, a single object, however insignificant, which, if properly understood, will not be seen to subserve some benevolent end. The entire framework of the physical universe, no less than the glorious results of those forces which control it, demonstrate the benevolent character of its Designer and Architect; for He has everywhere impressed upon His work this feature of the Divine mind.

We are, therefore, not surprised to find the same principle in the moral government of God. The same arrangement observed in the physical world enters into the plan upon which God has established human society. It is a grand feature in God's spiritual economy. Those who shrink from an acknowledgment of its justice, or deny its force, come in direct conflict with God. A violation of divine law is followed by a penalty, corresponding in severity with the dignity of the broken statute. The punishment visited upon offenders against this law of benevolence is the loss of the Divine favor and the incurring of God's displeasure. This is sometimes manifested by the withholding of His providential blessings; at other times by taking away temporal and spiritual gifts. Offerings sacred to God and His cause are required in the Scriptures, not because He needs them, but because they are necessary to the development of that type of character without which we cannot enter heaven. These gifts are the spontaneous outflows of a grateful spirit, and will always be evidences of piety, as they

are the fruits of it. Faith must produce fruits. "A good tree bringeth forth good fruit."

The offerings under the Jewish economy were numerous, and as expensive as they were manifold. There were, first of all, costly presents needed for the construction of the tabernacle in the wilderness, and, subsequently, for the erection of the temple. Then their daily sacrifices, and their festival occasions, made heavy demands upon their flocks and their fruits. Besides the offerings required by their ceremonial law, they were bound to make provision for their poor. There are several reasons which may have influenced the Lord in requiring so many offerings from the children of Israel. One of these, doubtless, was that he might lead them to cultivate a benevolent disposition, and thus assimilate them to his own character. By imposing the duty of frequent sacrifices they would be exercised in benevolence, and thus develop the nobler instincts of their nature, while the less noble would be correspondingly suppressed. There is nothing so truly elevating, or that imparts such a God-like aspect to human character, as disinterested offices of benevolence. The Redeemer has drawn a beautiful portrait of our Father's goodness, which is proclaimed by the descending showers and the quickening sunbeams. Another object which God had in view in ordering the Mosaic economy, was to illustrate the very intimate connection between their prosperity and their fidelity to God. If He demands much, it is that He may bestow much. His blessings much more than compensated for the offerings required by their ceremonial law, and it is a remarkable fact, that when they most

scrupulously observed their rituals they prospered most. It is a standing monument of the excellency of that principle in their government, which demanded the recognition of God's claim to the best of their fruits, and the most perfect that their flocks could afford, since, by this acknowledgment, they were continually impressed by the fact, that "every good and perfect gift cometh from the Father of lights." The unexampled prosperity and growth of Israel while strictly complying with the Divine requisitions, is an ample refutation of the slanders of those who maintain that the service of God is oppressive. While they were faithful to God, he delighted in them, and His sheltering Providence defended their land from the blighting mildew, and their cattle from disease. In those periods of their history when they labored under great national pressures, their calamities could always be traced to a dereliction of duty. The prophet Malachi unveils the cause of their distresses in his day, by pointing to the character of the victims offered in sacrifice. "Ye have brought the halt, the lame, and the blind;" which was in direct conflict with the law on that subject. They had blamed God for the failure of their crops, and for the general decline of their prosperity; but the prophet proves them guilty, covetous, and unfaithful, and shows that these calamities, which were sweeping the land with desolating power, were only the threatened effects of their apostasy. Their condition was deplorable, but it was not hopeless. Their sins might be forgiven, their calamities removed, and their blessings restored. The Lord challenges them to a test of His faithfulness. If they

would reverence His house, observe His ordinances, bring all the tithes into His storehouses, he engages to pour upon them such a flood of blessings that there should not be room to receive them. They had robbed God ; so that their sufferings were not the result of misfortune, but of crime.

The government of Jehovah does not change. The Christian pilgrim, like the Israelite, must expect disasters when he is unfaithful ; and although every one is left free to consecrate of his substance to the cause of Christ, as he may have ability and grace, his spiritual prosperity, if not always his temporal advancement, will be graduated by his liberality and devotion to the cause of redeeming mercy. There are innumerable avenues through which the Lord may, and does act, either to bring about the prosperity or adversity of man. There are unseen streams of blessing that may be full and flowing, or dried up at the pleasure of Him who is the fountain of all good. What folly to attempt to deprive the Lord of his rightful due, when he holds the resources of the universe at His disposal. The rain, sun, earth, wind, air, all are His ministers and do His pleasure. All our blessings, yea, even life and health, are dependent on His good pleasure. The burnt-offering among the Jews was intended to teach them entire devotion to God ; it was to be wholly consumed ; and hence the apostle exhorts Christians—"Brethren, I beseech you, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."

But there was one ordinance that is especially in-

structive in its symbolic teachings, which it is proper to notice—"the altar of incense." It is described in Exodus xxx. 1-11, and is manifestly a type of the family altar which the Lord requires to be reared in every Christian home. The costliness of the materials of which it was made, its locality in the tabernacle, and the time and manner of offerings, all indicate its spiritual significance. Built of rare wood, and overlaid with pure gold, it was prophetic of the value of a Christian family altar. It was placed "before the veil, by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy-seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee." The holy of holies was separated from it by the veil. That holiest of places was a type of heaven, into which the high priest entered once every year. The Christian pilgrim has his altar of communion, and, though established on earth, it is only separated from heaven by a thin veil; his great high priest, Jesus, is within the holy of holies, offering up the prayers of the suppliant, sprinkled with his own blood, as sweet incense to God. Our Father meets with us there. And as Aaron, the priest of Israel, was enjoined to offer incense there every morning when he dressed the lamps, and every evening when he lighted the lamps, so, also, every head of a Christian home, who is virtually the high priest of his family, is solemnly bound to offer the sacrifice of praise and prayer for himself and his household on the family altar. Aaron was to make an atonement upon the horns of that altar once a year; thus also should the parent plead the merits of the Redeemer's atonement at his family altar, in behalf of himself, his household, and the world.

There could not be a plainer, or more beautiful symbol of an obvious duty of the pious. It is an exalted privilege to pray at all; it is an undeserved and unspeakable honor to hold communion with Deity. But at this altar we find the gate of heaven; only this veil of flesh holds the eyes of the truly devout from beholding the glorious majesty of heaven. But, although these eyes may not look upon God as He is, yet may the contrite spirit be conscious of the indwelling presence of Jehovah, and be filled with all the fulness of God. From these altars, reared in the tabernacles of the righteous, clouds of holy incense ascend to heaven, and return in rich and glorious showers of mercy. And "as the rain and snow that come down from heaven return not thither, but water the earth and make it to bring forth and bud," thus, the answers to fervent believing prayer diffuse their blessings over all the world, causing it to bloom with the graces of religion. The annals of eternity can only unfold the magnificent results of prayer. Here it may be known and felt that the altar of incense is a blessing, but the extent of its influence none can estimate. That it creates a heavenly atmosphere, instinct with spiritual forces that produce the happiest effects upon human character, is manifest to all who will contrast the members of a Christian family with those who honor not God. The youthful germs of immortality that are budding within those hallowed circles, are imperceptibly gathering upon their characters a style of excellence and moral glory, altogether unknown where children grow up without the influences of religion. Even neighborhoods where

these daily oblations are made, are clothed with an air of sanctity that may be felt. These altars in the tabernacles of the righteous are the connecting links between heaven and earth: the places where the glories of heaven blend with that which is pure upon earth. Mortals and immortals hold intercourse with each other there. Could the veil that hides the invisible world from ours be severed, what an enrapturing spectacle would rush upon our vision by the family altar! There, bowed in humble reverence, parents and children, and from all hearts issuing fervent desires, grateful emotions, burning aspirations after the Holy One, while the Father of the universe, the Saviour of sinners, and the Holy Ghost, descend with heavenly majesty to dwell in those contrite bosoms, while troops of ministering spirits float about on joyous wing over the happy circle. Blessed be the Lord! Heaven still sheds its tranquil glory over the recovered Edens of earth!

The altar of incense was to exist through all the generations of Israel; the family altar can never be demolished while a pious household exists in this fallen world. There are a multitude of considerations which demand the morning and evening sacrifice! The necessities of pilgrims must always bring them to this source of strength. Here they obtain grace to help in the time of need. Here they are refreshed, fed with living bread, and satisfied with water from the brook of life, that, like Elijah, they may continue their journey through life's desert. But at the altar of prayer they also find their richest enjoyments. There they rise far above the turmoil of this world, and their

feelings blend with the raptures of the Redeemed. There their minds soar on eagles' wings on high, to hold fellowship with God. There they pour out their hearts for the salvation of their little ones, and draw upon their tender hearts by believing prayer the moulding and purifying influence of heaven. It is a blessed, glorious place; one that will, that *must*, always be cherished by the pious soul. When driven by tempests, and alarmed by storms that sweep his path, the mercy seat is a safe, a sure retreat for the agitated spirit:

“From every stormy wind that blows,
From every tide of swelling woes,
There is a calm, a sure retreat,
'Tis found beneath the mercy-seat.”

It is the place of communion, not only with God, but also with kindred souls. The communion of saints is enjoyed there. At the morning and evening sacrifice, there is a mingling of souls of all God's beloved children. A bond of sympathy, that joins into holy union all that are partakers of Christ's nature, keeps *en rapport* with each other all the members of God's holy family in heaven and on earth.

“There is a scene where spirits blend,
Where friend holds fellowship with friend;
Though sundered far, by faith they meet,
Around one common mercy seat.”

Let the pilgrims to the heavenly Canaan religiously observe the ordinances of the Lord. Let them cheerfully render unto God those offerings which gratitude and love enjoin. With their hearts let them give unto

the cause of Christ of the gifts which God has bestowed; and after they have met the claims of benevolence, and discharged the offices of charity, let them not forget to pray. "With thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." Amid the conflicts and trials of life they may not, cannot do without the daily manna from heaven. Prayer is to the soul what the air is to the lungs—it is its very life, its strength, its glory. And, seeing that we have an advocate with the Father, let us continually resort to our Divine High Priest. He is the captain of our salvation, He leads the way, and bids us follow in the path of regeneration. Those who have obeyed the summons, and entered His service, can testify that in obedience they have found true happiness; and those who have already gone up out of great tribulation, and are now rejoicing before the eternal throne, all join in utterances of praise to Immanuel. The eternal Canaan now opens its glorious scenes to the eye of faith; its music, its raptures, may be ours, my fellow-pilgrims. Here, by the cross of our blessed Lord, and in view of that fadeless crown held out to our view, let us renew our vows of fidelity. When faint or weary, when oppressed or persecuted, let us repair to the altar of prayer, and there gather new energy from communion with God, "to mount up with wings like eagles, to run and not be weary, to walk and not faint." Soon, if faithful, shall our prayers melt into praises, and our groans into sublime shouts of victory.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SOLICITUDE OF MOSES FOR HOBAB, AND THE CHRISTIAN PILGRIM'S INVITATION TO HIS UNCONVERTED FRIENDS TO JOURNEY WITH HIM TO HEAVEN.

Read Numbers x. 29-33.

THERE are certain events in the history of every immortal being more notable than others. Such are, especially, those periods that exert a determining power over the future destiny of the soul. It is then that the ages of eternity are compressed into moments, and a whole life is comprehended in a single action. It is not marvellous that the soul should be greatly agitated, and that, under the conscious pressure of those dread realities, every fibre of its mysterious organism should quiver with emotion. If, in the providence of God, some cherished one is called to leave us for a distant land, whose face we shall never more behold on earth, we experience emotions somewhat akin to those which agitated the sensibilities of Moses. He was about to be separated from a tried kinsman, whose generosity and kindness had given him a home, and a faithful wife, when a stranger in the land of Midian, and his nature protested against the rupture of those bonds which held them for many years in holy fellowship. The union of generous souls acquires a sanctity and tenderness by the lapse of time, and a

dissolution of disinterested friendship is attended with intense anguish. In the long and intimate association of the distinguished leader of the Hebrews and his father-in-law, two noble spirits blended, and when duty demanded a suspension of those kind offices which their relation to each other suggested, it seemed like the breaking up of the foundation of their being. But there was still a loftier element that entered into the solicitude of Moses than that which originated in natural affection. Hobab might relapse into idolatry if he returned to the place of his residence, whereas, if he accompanied Israel, he would become a partaker of those exalted blessings which the Infinite God had promised to bestow upon His people. Incorporated with the chosen nation, himself and family would be identified with all that was great and glowing in the prospective developments of their national existence. And, now that the Divine symbol beckoned the hosts of Israel to strike their tents, and commence their march from the wilderness of Sinai towards the promised land, the heart of Moses yearns over Hobab, while he exclaims: "We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord has said, I will give it you, come thou with us and we will do thee good, for the Lord has spoken good concerning Israel." There, upon a rocky eminence, stood the noble leader of the Hebrews, looking with his father-in-law out upon the marshalled hosts, and, as they moved with streaming banners and sounding trumpets, he begs Hobab to go with them, while the pillar of cloud, like a hovering angel, seemed to join in the invitation. It was a moment of intense interest to both; Hobab felt the love

of home, and the associations of youth and manhood resisting the appeal, while spiritual and eternal considerations urged him to accept the invitation so graciously tendered. But while that was an extraordinary occasion, and linked its issues with eternity, that scene so affecting in its transactions, has, since then, often been re-enacted in our fallen world.

Christians who are now on their pilgrimage to heaven realize the painful emotions of Moses, as they look upon their unconverted friends who are walking in the broad road to death. Having been delivered from the bondage of corruption, and tasted of the goodness of the Lord, they now rejoice in the hope of everlasting life. They have turned their faces Zionwards, and now earnestly solicit their friends to flee the wrath to come, and go with them on the narrow road to glory. They realize much more sensibly than they did anterior to their conversion, that they are strangers and pilgrims on earth; that here they have no abiding city, no rest, no permanent home; and they know that all their fellow men are alike frail. And now that they contemplate all earthly things in the light of inspired truth and the eternal world, they behold with alarm the insensibility and danger of their friends. Seeing that the objects which sinners love must speedily perish, that their happiness is unreal, their hopes delusive, and that, drifting on the wide and deep current of iniquity, they will soon be dashed on the bleak shores of a cheerless eternity, unless rescued by the arm of an Almighty Saviour, they feel an intense desire for their salvation. There are many particulars in the solici-

tude of Moses for Hobab that are reproduced in the experience of the Christian.

From this stage of their progress they resumed their journey in a hopeful frame of mind. The Israelite had a living faith, a firm trust in God. He had witnessed so many Divine interpositions on his behalf, that his faith, which was, perhaps, born amid the displays of God's avenging power in Egypt, had a long season of growth, and such nourishment as was fitted to impart to it its greatest energy. And, as he had but recently witnessed the grandeur and omnipotence of Jehovah on Mount Sinai, and had now, in the law written by God's finger, the assurances of the Infinite One, that those energies and perfections in the Godhead which reared and sustained the universe, would encircle him as a wall of fire, his hope was firm and his faith strong. True, he had never seen the land of his ancestors, neither had any of that generation looked upon the home of their fathers. All that they knew about it was derived from the traditions that descended from parents to children, and what the Lord was pleased to communicate through their excellent leader. But they believed that God was faithful and true and that He would make it to them an exceeding good land, a land flowing with milk and with honey. The pilgrim to the earthly Canaan therefore relied implicitly upon God's promises.

Those who journey towards that celestial country, of which the Holy Land was typical, rely upon the Divine assurances concerning that blessed place. They believe in the existence of that place, and accept, as truthful to the letter, all the sublime descriptions of

the heavenly state which are contained in the Holy Oracles. The Christian has not seen with bodily eyes the incorruptible inheritance to which he is heir, but he knows that it is robed in glorious light. Jesus came from heaven that He might show our feet the way, and He assures us that it is a place of ineffable glory. He announced to our fallen race, as Moses did to the Hebrews, that our compassionate Father desires to bring us out of this wilderness into the wide realms of endless felicity. The great Redeemer of our race "is the way, the truth, and the life," and no man cometh to the Father, or to His house of many mansions, but by Him who laid down His life for us.

The children of Israel traversed a country full of perils. Their path led through privations, sufferings, persecutions, and sore conflicts. They were often weary and faint. Sometimes they moved cautiously through districts infested by serpents and ravenous beasts; at other times they scaled the rugged mountain; now panting under a scorching heat, then again chilled by the dews of night; and, all along their road, enemies were lying in wait, or prowling around their camp. But, to compensate for these dangers and trials, they received many gracious tokens of the Divine goodness. "The Lord had spoken good concerning Israel," and He was doing them good all along their journey. If they found the water bitter, He provided the means to sweeten the well; and, for this one, Marah, Elim gives them twelve fountains and seventy palm trees. And while toiling through burning sands, the hope of reaching the goodly Canaan infused courage and strength. In the history of their chequered

experience we find a picture of the Christian's life. The followers of Jesus have a dangerous road to travel. "This world is no friend to grace." Sorrows often spring where joys had bloomed; the roses pale and perish, but leave their thorns to wound. They find places which they call Marah, for there their joys wither, and their comforts die. Disappointments and losses blight their expectations; afflictions and bereavements fill their cup with gall and wormwood. Through these dark scenes our feet move heavily, and our pilgrimage grows weary; yet, even then are we cheered by the light of a Father's countenance, that gilds our clouds of dark calamity with the radiance of heaven. Formidable enemies are also about our path, for we "wrestle with principalities and powers." Yet all these trials may be successfully overcome, and they are forgotten in the enjoyments administered by the way. The refreshing waters of life and the grateful shade of the palm are also found along the path to glory. The Christian has joys of which the world knows not; and when storms and tempests sweep around him, and ominous clouds throw their dark shadows upon the gay and thoughtless throng, he rejoices within the circle of a pious home, with those who are fellow heirs with him of everlasting life. If beloved ones are still without Christ and without hope, he earnestly prays them to turn from the road of death, saying, "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good." And, where the invitation is enforced by a godly life and believing prayer, it carries with it an energy that few can resist. The pilgrim to Zion has also many precious hours, yea, days, on which the felicity and glory of

the upper sanctuary rest. How delightful are the ordinances of religion to the soul panting after God! What glorious joys does the Sabbath bring? What rapture swells his spirit on the mount of communion? Blissful moments! when Jesus manifests himself to His disciples as He does not to the world. Those holy hours—when the soul, like the beloved disciple, reposes on the warm heart of Jesus, throbbing with infinite love—those seasons compass a wealth of ineffable glory. Yet, however grateful the experiences of the disciple of Jesus may be, he looks upon all that is beautiful and good with a traveller's eye. When tempted to pause on his heavenward journey, he hears a voice sounding in his ears—"Arise and depart ye, for this is not your rest." And, looking up, he beholds the Shechinah beckoning him upward; the spirit of a beloved, sainted one, now shining as a brilliant star of glory from afar, bids him onward! onward! to rest, to glory!

The land promised and given to the Israelite was an exceedingly good land. It was possessed of the most valuable properties. It abounded in fruits and such other products as to make it a land of plenty. Rich in its mineral resources and singularly fertile, it was in all respects a most desirable place of residence. If we read the description of Moses concerning this land, we may well ask, could there be found a country possessing greater excellencies? The growth and national prosperity of the subsequent Jewish commonwealth, during the reigns of David and Solomon, prove conclusively the great fertility of its soil and the abundance of its mineral resources. That earthly Canaan

adumbrated but feebly the spiritual glories of that celestial kingdom in reversion for the children of God. Heaven is portrayed in the Holy Scriptures under the most gorgeous imagery. It is spoken of as an "incorruptible kingdom," glowing with more than oriental splendor. It is a city of pure gold, with gates of pearl and walls of jasper. David, though surrounded by the magnificence and splendor of his court, turns from all earthly grandeur and sings, "In Thy presence there is fulness of joy, and at Thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore." He felt that he was frail; he knew that his crown must fade, that his throne would crumble into dust, and that the glory which shone through his palace, though it might linger about the throne of Israel for centuries, would ultimately grow dim; but, upon that sublime residence of Deity no blight would ever fall, and that the joys and pleasures of yonder world would abide forever and ever! Amid that profusion of earthly enjoyments his heart yearned for a higher good, for "the fulness of joy in God's presence." To that imperishable kingdom, to that matchless scene of glory, do the aspirations of the sons and daughters of the Almighty ascend. Around that abode of peace do the desires of the pilgrim cluster, upon it are fixed his hopes, and within its charming and brilliant circle he will spend the years of eternity. That vast, but unspeakably glorious structure, had laid out upon it the skill of infinite wisdom; it is filled with the riches of the universe, and adorned by all that can contribute to the felicity of the immortal spirit. It is a place of rest, and no disturbing influence shall mar the tranquillity of the blest. It is

the exalted home of God's spiritual Israel. The redeemed are there, far removed from the disquietudes and vexations of earth, perfectly holy, and therefore perfectly happy. They see God unveiled; they look upon that throne whose lofty grandeur fills angelic minds with admiration; and, as they look out upon immensity, and rejoice amid the sublime mysteries of eternity, they know and feel that this is their own blessed home. Every capacity is filled to overflowing with joy, every pulsation is the ecstatic thrill of eternal life. Their ears are greeted with strains of lofty harmonies flowing from golden harps; their hearts swell with rapture, their souls are full of glory! No created mind can adequately conceive the magnitude of the excellencies of the place; no tongue, though touched with a seraph's fire, can utter them. "We know in part." "Now we see through a glass darkly." To this transcendentally glorious home the Christian pilgrim is going; and, how appropriately may he address his fellow-men, and especially his kindred, in the language of Moses, "We are journeying to the place of which the Lord has said, I will give it you; come thou with us, and we will do thee good, for the Lord has spoken good concerning Israel."

He who has felt the quickening influences of the Gospel on his own heart loves the souls of men—Christianity makes him merciful. Should the compassionate Father of our race deign to draw the eyes of an impenitent soul to these pages, permit me, a traveller with you to eternal ages, to claim your audience a moment. Having been in your condition, and tasted the bitterness of sin, I have also learned the perils and the

hardships of the way of the transgressor; and I would most earnestly, but affectionately, urge you to turn from the treacherous paths of sin and to walk in that narrow road that leadeth unto life. "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good." Fellow-sinner, away from God your life is destitute of peace, your way is dark and leads to a darker destiny. I know that you have seasons of distress, when you acknowledge your infatuation to yourself, when you resolve on a different life, when you loathe your sins and would fain escape the torments they plant in your bosom. Oh! that you would hearken to the friendly warnings of conscience, and suffer me to conduct you, by the light of God's Word, from the vassalage of sin into the liberty which Christ offers. Behold what a life of sin has already wrought upon your immortal nature! Do you recall the days of youth, when none of those tokens of a deep degradation were upon you which now alarm you? Alas! what a change has come over your faculties. Held firmly in chains of vice, which even now begin to burn like bands of fire, you scarcely offer any resistance to that malignant power that is urging you forward in crime. Yet, stop and think; pause, ere the precipice crumbles beneath your feet, and you fall into the bottomless abyss! You need not perish! You may be saved from endless woe! "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from *all* sin." O that you were penitent, that you would feel yourself immortal, that you would pray! Though utterly destitute of power to form yourself anew, cry for help to Jesus. He is merciful, He is able, He is willing to deliver and to save. One earnest cry of the penitent and contrite soul will wake the

arm of Jehovah to its relief. "He saves to the uttermost all that come unto God through Him." Let me point you to that multitude now wending their way, it may be, through much tribulation, but onward, to glory. Behold they move with a cheerful step, and with a light heart, up God's holy hill! But you, ah! whither are you tending? to *death*, to *judgment*, but, alas, also to a dreary eternity, swept by the storms of endless wrath. The canopy that overhangs the abode of the lost is dark: no star glimmers amid its gloom; no beam of mercy ever flits athwart that darkness; cries of anguish, shrieks of wo, and unbroken notes of doleful sorrow flow from those shattered harps, and fill that world with wailing. And these appalling miseries are the price that men pay for those momentary pleasures that a wicked world offers. Fellow-mortal, you have a precious soul; it has noble capacities; it has immeasurable desires; it has sublime aspirations. Nothing earthly can satisfy its wants. Christ only can fill its vast capacities. That soul must live forever, in raptures or in wo. Will you go with us in the way to happiness and to God? Why lingerest thou? Oh! hasten, while your heart pulsates with life; yes, away to the feet of Him who says, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Does this world charm you? Do its pleasures, its riches, its honors, its fame, and its glory, hold you spell-bound? "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul, or what could you give in exchange for your soul?" Come, then, with us to the cross. Look upon that innocent blood and ask, what are these wounds, and

wherefore inflicted, upon the immaculate victim? Linger around that holy spectacle that once struck the universe mute with astonishment, and convulsed Nature with paroxysms of anguish, until that rocky heart relents, and your soul is dissolved in tears of penitence, and you can cast yourself upon Christ as your only, but Almighty Saviour! The cross of Jesus is the starting-point, the entrance on this way to glory. The tabernacle in the wilderness was designed to indicate the way to heaven. It was an oblong enclosure; at the end where the worshipper entered he found the laver of water, where he washed. This ablution was symbolic of the washing of regeneration which the Gospel provides and enjoins. The next stage was the altar of sacrifice where the victim stood, upon whose head the penitent laid his hand and confessed his sins; then the priest offered the lamb on the altar as an atonement for the offender. This was typical of the sacrifice of Calvary, where the Lamb of God was immolated for the sins of the world. Then came the worshipper into the sanctuary with thank-offerings, and through this department lay the road to the holy of holies. Into this latter place none but the high priest could enter, and he only when he was sprinkled with blood; thus imaging to us, who have followed the Redeemer in the regeneration into the sanctuary, that our great high priest has entered heaven, the holy of holies, whither all his faithful ones will follow. By this order of the tabernacle service we are taught that the way to heaven lies through the church. It properly commences in baptism, where the infant is brought into covenant relations with Christ; at the cross, when ma-

ture age has come, there must be hearty repentance and confession, and a consecration of our being as a living sacrifice to the Son of God. By this public confession of Christ we are introduced into the sanctuary, the church, where the word and the ordinances of religion are to mature us for the Holy of Holies. We know of no other way to heaven, the Bible brings no other path to view but that which lies through repentance and faith, and the use of those means of grace ordained of God. To warn presumptuous souls the Saviour has said, "He that entereth not in by the gate, but climbeth over the wall, is a thief and a robber." We dare not hew out for ourselves another path; "we must be born again," "enter in at the strait gate and walk in the narrow road," if we would rise to everlasting life, and obtain a fadeless crown.

There are many solemn considerations which should move the wanderers from God to accept the invitation of the Christian pilgrim. The impenitent know that it is offered in good faith, and prompted by the noblest dictates of love. All efforts made by sincere believers for the salvation of others, spring from the love of Christ which constrains them. The pious are deeply affected by the guilt and misery of sinners. "I saw the transgressors, and was grieved because they kept not Thy law," said David. In the midst of abounding iniquity Jeremiah exclaims, "O! that my head were waters, and mine eyes fountains of tears, that I might weep, day and night, over the slain of the daughter of my people." Isaiah utters the mind of Jehovah when he cries, "O! that thou hadst hearkened unto my commandments, then should thy peace have been like a

river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." When Jesus drew near and beheld the city, "he wept over it and said, O! that thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes." All these words, like those uttered by Moses to Hobab, breathe a deep pathos; and language so beautiful and touching should win the sinner from the error of his way.

Come with us, wretched, undone sinner; go with us and we will do you good. We will instruct you; we will unfold to you the difficulties, the intricacies, the sorrows and the joys of this journey to the skies; we will encourage and comfort you. As God has revealed His good pleasure to us, as the Spirit has shown us of the things of Christ, so will we help you to behold them. By accepting the invitation which the church and your friends utter, you will enter upon the heirship of a rich inheritance. God has spoken good concerning Israel, and all those promises fulfilled in the settlement and prosperity of His chosen, are pledges to the Christian for the realization of those magnificent hopes which, like stars, glow with Divine splendor in the celestial firmament. Even now God is our sun and shield, and He will give us grace and glory.

God has also spoken good concerning this journey. His Word calls it "the right way;" "the good old way in which ye shall find rest to your souls;" "the way of holiness, and the redeemed shall walk therein." And in the Gospel it is called "the new and living way." The Lord also engages to accompany His people on this journey: "My presence shall go with

you, and I will give you rest." The travellers through the desert needed the interpositions of Providence, and their path was luminous with Divine wonders: but the Israelite required Divine guidance and help no more than the Christian pilgrim. He who calls out of darkness into marvellous light, will also conduct to glory. Why should Hobab have hesitated when offered to become a partaker of Israel's glory, and his family a part of the chosen nation? He could not resist the appeal of friendship; he could not withstand the yearnings of human love. Shall the sinner repel the yearnings of Divine love? Will you be deaf to the invitation uttered in the Saviour's groans, and bathed with your Redeemer's blood? *Why* should you linger, or oscillate between heaven and earth? Why hesitate in the decision of such a question? There is an hour on which your destiny will turn: it is an hour when the tremendous realities of the eternal world, as they shall affect the soul, are decided. May not this be the time when your name may be inscribed by the recording angel in the Book of Life, or your doom as an apostate of heaven may be chronicled in the records of the damned? Oh! my God, what a moment is that which links the soul with the glories of Thy throne, or with the hopeless misery of the lost. Yet is this dread decision made while the invitations of heaven ply the heart. "The spirit and the bride say, come." The church of the Redeemer joins anxious parents, friends and companions, in their invitation to their perishing kindred, saying, "We are journeying to the place of which the Lord has said, I will give it you; come

thou with us and we will do thee good, for the Lord has spoken good concerning Israel."

"To-day, if you will hear his voice,
Now is the time to make your choice;
Say, will you be forever blest,
And with the glorious Jesus rest?
Will you be saved from guilt and pain?
Will you with Christ forever reign?
Say, will you to Mount Zion go?
Say, will you have this Christ or no?"

Behold how little, how worthless are the things of earth, how great the realities of eternity! Lo, a fadeless crown, an imperishable kingdom, a house of rapturous, eternal glory is offered to all who enter the strait gate and walk in the narrow way to life! "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars, forever and forever."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE PILGRIMS' SHECHINAH ; OR, THE LUMINOUS CLOUD A SYMBOL OF THE DIVINE PRESENCE.

Read Exodus, xl. 34-38.

AMONG the many attractions that glow within the temple of Nature, there is nothing more beautiful than the clouds. Whether viewed in a state of repose, or in motion, they kindle in the thoughtful the most pleasing emotions. What an aspect of majesty do they assume when they gracefully rise, and roll in mountain masses up to the pearly gates of heaven ! How sublime the scene, when, like dark chariots driven by their swift steeds, they rush through the sky, breaking upon each other with the shock of contending armies, amid lightnings, while the voice of God's thunder reverberates through the grand dome of Nature until the pillars of heaven tremble, and a conscious tremor vibrates along every chord that holds in unison the vast organism around us ! What a dread silence is felt as the sound dies away in the distance, and the vibrating earth becomes still ? What a holy awe and what a profound sense of the weakness of the creature and majesty of the Creator, fill the hearts of every living thing ! No scream of the eagle now rings out in the storm ; no growl of discontent is heard in the mountain den of the lion ; no voice from great or small ;

even angel harps are mute in that moment when *all* feel that God alone is great!

It was in the morning, after a showery night, that I stood upon the ocean's beach watching for the appearance of the king of day. The bosom of the deep, to the southward, had the appearance of a forest partially thinned. The clouds standing upon the watery surface, like immense trees, stretching into the far-above, while through the openings between them the eye could discern the white wings of the coasting vessels on the other side. I turned to the east, and a large sheet of cloud hung like a curtain over the door of the chamber, out of which the sun was soon to issue. For some minutes the edges of that sable cloud were burning with intense brilliancy, and, lined with this glowing golden fringe, it seemed as though ten thousand suns were pouring their floods of light upon a map of burnished gold. Presently I saw the curtain ascending, as if lifted by an unseen hand, and the sun came forth, as if rising out of the sea and issuing through the two massive pillars of cloud, that rested upon the water and reached to heaven, separated from each other just far enough to give exit to his full-orbed glory. I stood like one entranced, and involuntarily poured forth the emotions of my heart in the lofty strains of the sweet singer of Israel. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy-work. Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun: Which

is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run his race. His going forth is from the end of heaven, and his circuit to the ends of it; and there is nothing hidden from the heat thereof."

Allusions to the clouds are frequent in the Scriptures, and the beauty and force of their symbolic meaning can only be properly understood from a knowledge of the oriental climate. From May to September there is scarcely a cloud visible in an eastern sky. As in such climes clouds refreshingly veil the oppressive glories of the sun, they symbolize the Divine presence in its sheltering and protecting power. Concerning the cloudy pillar that guided the Israelites, there could be no misapprehension of the design or import of the cloud. It was a symbol of Jehovah's presence, for it is expressly declared that He dwelt in a cloud. It was intended to subserve a highly important end to the travellers through the desert. Its appearance had been duly announced, and all Israel saw it descending, and assuming its position before the hosts who were to be guided by it through a long and perilous journey. During the day its aspect was pleasant to the eye, for it stood before them as the canopy of that omnipotent Being whose mighty arm was working their deliverance. At night it glowed with the Divine glory. It was a constant monitor, fitted to keep alive in their minds a sense of God's all-seeing eye. It inspired unbounded trust in Him who had formed it. In that hour of imminent peril, when they stood between the tumultuous sea and an infuriated army, momentarily expecting a disastrous overthrow, the angel of the Lord moved the

pillar of cloud in their rear, so that it extended itself as a huge mountain of darkness, enveloping the Egyptians in gloom, but pouring a stream of light from its bosom on the terrified Hebrews. Such is still the mercy and power of God, that now, as then, Providences which are obscure to the wicked and inspire them with alarm, are light to the righteous and a token of God's presence.

God had said, "My presence shall go with you and I will give you rest." Here was the cloud, a constant witness of His faithfulness, so that none would dare for a moment entertain a doubt of his encircling power. It was designed to regulate their marches. When the Lord desired them to proceed, the cloud, which rested upon the tabernacle, would slowly rise into the air with an onward motion, which was the signal for them to follow. When it was time for them to encamp, it hung motionless in mid-air until the tabernacle was pitched, then it descended in graceful folds upon it. God's people always had their Shechinah to guide them through this changeful world.

The Shechinah that guided the Israelite was symbolic of that which should in all coming time lead the footsteps of the Christian pilgrim in his progress to everlasting life. The Shechinah is sometimes represented as a token of that invisible spiritual presence of Jesus with His disciples, promised in his comforting words — "Lo! I am with you even unto the end of the world."

It seems to me, after mature reflection, far better, as it is assuredly more consonant with the laws which govern symbols, to regard the pillar of cloud in the wilderness as typical of the Church in her varied in-

strumentalities ordained to secure the salvation of souls.

When we enter the communion of the Church with renewed hearts, with penitent and believing souls, we pass through the strait gate of repentance to tread the narrow road to the heavenly Canaan. Thenceforward we are in the sacred enclosure through all the stages of our progress to realms of eternal light. The Church canopies the presence of Jehovah-Jesus. There He manifests Himself to His people as he does not unto the world. Having replenished His church with those spiritual forces that are necessary to instruct in the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and that are efficient in the working of that purity, hope, faith and charity, absolutely essential to secure fellowship with God, the Church with her holy oracles, her ordinances, and the example of her saints becomes a ministering and guiding angel to the journeying soul.

The elements which enter into the structure of the Christian's Shechinah may be summed up as follows.—First of all the Word of God. The blessed oracles of truth are in the keeping of the Church, and greatly add to her light and glory. “Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” The Bible illumines subjects that could only be known through Revelation. True, His works declare Him, and the visible things testify of the power of the God that made them. Yea, from ten thousand shrines in Nature, messages of Divinity are pouring in upon the mind, and while the entire physical creation is redolent with the majesty and glory of God, yet in the Scriptures there are higher revelations, more sublime unfoldings of the character of the glorious architect of heaven and earth.

Nature knows nothing of God's will concerning us; the Bible reveals Him as our Father, and traces all the relations we sustain to Him. It brings to light our condition, our hope, our destiny. There are many subjects on which Nature sheds but a few glimmering rays; but they are made to shine out in a full clear light in the Bible. Unaided reason cannot read the great lessons inscribed upon the broad universe. A man who enters a darksome cave filled with various objects, discerns them imperfectly, or misapprehends their character altogether, until the light of a burning torch illumines all its hitherto obscure recesses. So also will the inquirer for salvation grope in darkness, and know not at what he stumbles until the light of holy truth flashes on his path. The imagery of the Psalmist, in the passage already cited, was drawn from the mode in which caravans traversed the desert by night. On account of the oppressive heat, these companies sometimes repose during the day in some cool retreat, and at night the guide of the party, provided with a lighted flambeau held aloft, by this light leads the travellers onward in their journey. Thus it is with God's word; it subserves the purposes of a lamp through the moral darkness of this world. The Bible is an all-sufficient, and the only infallible guide to man. The way of its commandments is the path of life. It teaches us what we must believe, what must be experienced, and what we are to practise. It enlarges the sphere of our thoughts, and sanctifies and elevates the affections. It imparts vigor to the intellect, and gives grace and beauty to its operations. It exalts the judgment and guides its decisions with infallible light. It enlightens

the conscience and makes its intimations as the voice of God. It is a safe rule to walk by, but, above all, it unfolds the mystery of our being, contains a history of the race, and makes known the plan of redemption through Jesus Christ. It describes the origin of evil, the depravity of man, the progress of sin and the misery it produces, and the promised glory of the renovated earth. The Bible is the sun of our moral world, it warms humanity into the life divine, and robes it in the beauties of holiness. It is the guiding star of the pilgrim; it points to blissful hopes realized; it conducts to the new Jerusalem, the city of my God, my everlasting home.

Another property that enters into the formation of the Christian's Shechinah is the example of the saints. The oracles of God frequently hold up the examples of the saints for our guidance and imitation. Abel's faith and obedience are honorably mentioned. The unswerving obedience of Abraham, amid the most terrible ordeal through which a parent could pass, stands out upon the sacred page as a monument of the energy of a living faith, and commands our homage, and inspires us with fortitude amid great soul-trials, that enter into our discipline here on earth. Are we appalled by the multitude and power of our spiritual foes, the prayer of Elijah unveils to the vision of our faith the chariots and horsemen of the Lord encamped about us, and the blessed Spirit, pointing to the hosts of ministering angels, speaks to the trembling soul — "Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them."

Do we need encouragement to persevering prayer,

there rises one to our view on Mount Carmel, praying that the heavens, now for more than three years like brass, might open their fountains and send copious streams upon the parched earth. No sign is present to encourage his faith; he has prayed already six times, and the servant, returned from looking towards the sea, reports no success; but he knows that God is true, a hearer of prayer, and again his supplications ascend through the heated air, mingled with the cries of a perishing creation; and, behold, a cloud like a man's hand rises from the sea, it enlarges till it covers the heavens, and its treasures are poured upon mountain and valley, until the earth has drunk to its fill, and the fountains and rills, the streams and rivers, flow full and merrily, murmuring songs of gratitude and praise. Are we encompassed by alarming perils, and without any one to plead our cause, the spirit of Daniel, whose God still liveth, points us to Him who worketh deliverance for his people, who overcomes the fierceness of the lion, and subdues the wrath of kings. Models of devotion, of self-denial, of cross-bearing, of patient suffering, even unto death, abound in the Holy Word. We are exhorted to give heed, and to consider those who, through faith and well-doing, obtained "honor, glory, and immortality." "Wherefore, seeing we are compassed about by so great a cloud of witnesses," (worthies enumerated in Heb. 11,) "let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race set before us. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set

down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradictions of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." This is our visible and glorious Shechinah, this cloud of witnesses to the truth of Christianity and the exalted nature of its faith. The glorified spirits of the just, sparkling along the battlements of heaven, bending with intense solicitude over us, or moving with angels along our path—all these sons and daughters of glory are anxious spectators of our conflicts and progress. Child of the Holy One! Pilgrim to Zion! behold your Shechinah! a cloud of immortal spirits, who went up through much tribulation, but now shine in garments of white. Your guiding pillar through this world, morally made a desert by sin, is composed of the good, the great and illustrious saints who have risen to the joys of endless felicity. From all ranks, climes, and conditions, where human souls lived, representatives have appeared in glory. The throne and the cottage, the exalted spheres of intellectual exertion, and the humblest walks of earth, have furnished jewels to decorate the diadem that flashes with the lustre of ten thousand suns on the triumphant brow of Jesus. David and Lazarus, Daniel and Paul, Isaiah and John, prophets, martyrs, all the holy ones of God, from believing Abel to the infant that expired yesterday, are robed in gorgeous apparel of light, and sweeping their harps with joyful hands, while hallelujahs to the Lamb swell and roll in lofty grandeur round the eternal throne. Oh! my tempted soul, dost thou hear that glorious song? Its notes vibrate on my ear, its music thrills far down in my heart. Oh!

my soul, thou also art redeemed ! Thou hadst an interest in the precious sacrifice of Calvary ! My spirit, plume thy wings, extend thy pinions, open thy capacities, which this world could never fill, that gleams of yonder glory, and streams of yonder joy may flow into thee ; that, toiling here, I may be filled with God's fulness ; that, rising to heaven, I may be made a partaker of the glory of my Saviour.

The examples of the glorified saints are so numerous, that we shall find some fitted to instruct in whatever sphere of this changeful life the allotments of Providence have placed us. When the golden showers of prosperity spread around our path a bewildering glare, the king of Israel may teach us to whom we should ascribe the glory of our greatness. In distressing poverty, the widow of Sarepta, and Elijah fed by ravens, confirm our trust in Providence. In affliction and death we may remain unshaken by the example of the confessors and martyrs, who counted not their lives dear, that they might win Christ. In the last closing scenes, and amid the darkness and terrors of that hour which prostrates our earthly tabernacles, we may be supported by the sublime declaration of Paul—"I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day."

Another, and the most glorious part of the Christian's Shechinah, is the adorable Jesus. "Lo ! I am with you always, even to the end of the world." The presence of Jesus imparts light and glory to the pillar of cloud. The Word shines with His light, the lives of departed saints were made beautiful with His grace,

and He is therefore the crowning excellence of our guiding cloud. He is ever present in His church. The ordinances of religion are made efficient and delightful, just as He communes with our souls through these channels of mercy. He is shrouded in all the solemnities of the sanctuary, and, like the pillar of cloud, they veil the glorious presence of the Godhead. The penitent, believing soul, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, is filled with a heavenly joy, while participating in the ordinances instituted by Christ. Within His courts, as within his closet, he feeds upon the descending manna. There is an essential, and there is also an especial presence, of the Redeemer of the world. The material universe, which sprang forth bright-robed and glorious, and flushed with countless visible beauties, when His creative word rang through chaos, everywhere indicates His presence and sustaining energy. But, while a sense of His presence overshadows us when gazing into the quiet depths of the starry firmament, or, as we contemplate Him in the gorgeous magnificence of His vast creation; while, in the greater or smaller things of His power—in the dew-drop, or in the ocean—in the sunbeam, or in the sun—in the whispering zephyr, or in the royal thunder—we behold His presence, it is not that only which we see in the ordinances of religion. In the kingdom of Nature He is present, operating through established laws, as creator and preserver; in the Church we behold Him as the dispenser of grace, and the Saviour of men. As He sheds upon weary Nature the dews of night, causing it to bud and blossom, so in holy baptism He waters the springing germs of immortality. As He causes the

earth to produce its varied and abundant products, for the sustenance of man's physical nature, thus in the Church He provides a feast of good things for hungry souls. The God of Nature also lives and reigns as God of grace. The prophet in his picture of the Messianic reign, exclaims—"He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth. In his day shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth." He is imaged, in prophetic language, under symbols of life, of joy, and the beauties and fragrance of spring. The budding and blossoming desert is the world baptized with His grace. He shall be as the dew to Israel. "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. And your seed shall spring up like willows along the water-courses." All is glorious, rapturous, and ravishing, where the blessing and presence of Jesus are displayed.

But Christ is present to the consciousness of the believer. Though not visible with the bodily eye, as was the cloudy pillar that led the Israelite, His presence is even more real and glorious to the Christian. "I will never leave you nor forsake you." "In the world, ye shall have tribulation, but in me, ye shall have peace." "My presence shall go with you." Always true, His people are never disappointed in their expectations. In danger, He works their deliverance; in darkness, they walk by His light; in weakness, He giveth strength; in death, He crowns with victory; and in dying, He gives them life for evermore.

Such, then, is the Shechinah of the Christian pilgrim. Differing in the outward form of its structure,

but within, glowing with the grandeur of Divine Majesty. In following this cloud and pillar, we shall escape all error. The Bible has been rigidly tested by friends and foes, but has always come out of the ordeal infallible and glorious. The origin of those blighting errors that slay their thousands, is found in manifest departures from the light of this guiding star to glory. The moral deformities that are festering upon the social body, and poisoning its life, have been produced by those who cast away the burning torch of revelation, and walked in the fitful and bewildering glare of their heated passions. Error is infectious—it is possessed of a procreating energy; once sown in the mind, it will take root and multiply until it curses the soul with harvests of misery. I saw a field yielding golden harvests to reward the husbandman; but, one day a bird in its flight from a distant land, wearied with its exertions, alighted on it to recruit its exhausted energies—it dropped the seeds of a poisonous weed, which it had brought from the distant clime. Soon it grew, and, because it was of goodly appearance, and decorated with beautiful flowers, the owner of the field spared it. It multiplied, and the following year produced a thousand fold. Following that mysterious law, which proportions the rapidity of increase according to the deleteriousness of its nature, it ere long overran the field and filled the surrounding country, and became so rooted in the soil that no efforts could destroy it.

Tears of regret were wept by that man when he remembered that there was a period when, with a single blow, the noxious weed might have been destroyed;

but it was spared because its appearance was beautiful. So have I seen a mind prepared by intellectual culture for the reception of seeds that would produce a harvest of glory; it was a field of promise also, prayer had won upon it the dews of heaven; it had also been moulded by a mother's power, and was swept by the gentle, but quickening breath of a mother's influence, and I thought the angels would in the final day reap there a harvest for the eternal garner of God. But while looking into an opening future gilded with the radiance of hope, a dark spirit, but of angelic form and light, looked upon it, and behold no holy watchers guarded there; so he instilled a vicious sentiment, and it inflamed the passions; he implanted a seed from the tree of death, and it grew and multiplied until that intellectual field was overgrown with thorns and briars, and serpents and reptiles dwelt there, and the streams that flowed from that fountain had in them the poison of the adder, and, as they flowed along their course through society there was desolation; sounds of woe rose along its path, and the blight of death came upon all it touched. How different from that mind which was guarded against evil, where seeds of life sprang up and flourished until that spiritual field was like unto a scented grove, where fruits the most delicious, and flowers the rarest, shed their rich aroma on the air, that was vocal with the sweetest harmonies, and it was called the garden of the Lord, and, as I passed I heard a voice, saying, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For lo! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of

the turtle is heard in the land. The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grapes give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away." Now engrafted on Christ, the living vine, the genuine olive tree, that soul will bear fruit of which the widow and orphan will obtain nourishment, and after flourishing in the courts of the Lord's house, it will yield precious stores to the angel reapers in the final harvest.

Blessed be God! our world is no longer a scene of utter darkness, the moral firmament glows with innumerable orbs; and the light of those righteous ones who shine as the brightness of the firmament, and the splendor of Jesus, our morning star—these shall animate and guide us in the way everlasting. The Christian pilgrim need not, dare not fear; the cloud of witnesses beckons us onward to duty and to glory. The Bible, the example of the saints, the ordinances of religion, and the glorious presence of Jesus, constitute our pillar of cloud and fire; this, the Christian's Shechinah, we will follow. It has conducted millions to the promised rest; it is guiding others, and will conduct all the faithful to the new Jerusalem, and place them amid the rapturous glory of the everlasting home of the holy.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE DISCOURAGED PILGRIMS.

Read Numbers xxi. 4.

A SOUL discouraged is a sad spectacle; to realize its dark experience is yet more distressing. I once saw a magnificent eagle chained to the earth. Wounded in the wing, it had been captured and kept as an object of curiosity. The noble bird scorned the caresses of the crowd, his flashing eye now lifted to his native cliffs, then to the sun, he seemed to gather his energies for a lofty flight; but, the motion of his pinions sent a pang of pain and grief to his heart, and he sank back to the ground with a low, suppressed moan. It was a note of despair — his death scream; for he looked up no more, but expired in a few minutes. There is a dignity and nobility in the appearance of this king of birds, that cast a strange interest over his sad fate. But, who may describe the aspect of a despairing soul? One I looked upon, whose image will ever haunt me like a spectre. He was an aged man, his hoary locks falling over his shoulders, and, as I entered his chamber, the agonizing moan that I had heard long before I came to his room, fell upon my ear, with a startling exclamation, "I am lost! O, I am lost!" It was a mournful cry; not fierce, nor violent, but plaintive and sad. It issued from a soul over

which the thick darkness of despair had gathered its gloomy folds, and no ray of light or consolation could penetrate it, or reach the darkly-desolate chambers of the soul. It is not of such incurable despair that I mean to write, but of that despondency which, if unrelieved, might terminate in utter soul-desolation.

In the remote solitudes of the wilderness, we see a weary man seating himself under the shadow of a juniper tree. He was a brave man; his spirit never quailed before armed hosts, though himself unarmed. He feared no king, though he made a tyrant tremble. He had breasted the torrents of corruption that were sweeping over the Holy Land; he hurled the burning anathemas of an injured Sovereign against those in high places who overthrew God's altars, slew His prophets, and made Israel to sin. He had contended nobly for the Divine honor; but the force of royal example, and the potency of rewards and punishments, administered by a powerful government, joined with the corruptions of human nature, and abetted by the seductive charms of sin, had unitedly proved too much for the man of God. He believed the triumph of the power of darkness as complete as it was disastrous, and hope died within him; his heart throbbed painfully under the burden of his woes as he sat down exhausted under that tree. "And he requested for himself that he might die, and said it is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers." He lay down to sleep the sleep of death as he hoped, but an angel touched him and said: "Arise, and eat. And he looked, and behold there was a cake baked on coals, and a cruse of water at his head."

And having again laid down, the angel touched him a second time, and urged him to eat, while he unfolded the glorious fact to him that he was yet to accomplish a great work for God. Elijah was not the last wanderer to heaven who breathed the prayer of a discouraged soul. One, and another, have followed in his way, and, under a cheerless prostration of all their fond anticipations, have requested for themselves that they may die. "It is enough: now, O Lord, take away my life." It is sad to behold a man thus borne down by the worst of all burdens, the conviction that his untiring efforts for the advancement of the Divine glory have failed to accomplish their object. True, this can never take place, *i. e.* no labor consecrated to the cause of God can be entirely unproductive of good; yet, the dispirited mind feels as though all was in vain. Such a conviction is a burden that grows more intolerable with each moment of reflection, until his fortitude and strength melt away as the mist of the morning before the burning heat.

The Israelites in the desert sometimes gave way under the hardships of the journey. "The soul of the people was discouraged because of the way." They had toiled onward, and travelled far, but they were occasionally brought to a stand-still; and, under long-continued pressures, became victims of despondency. To behold a multitude in such a condition, is more painful than an isolated individual; yet such was their state of mind when "discouraged, because of the way." Hope had infused an energy that often made them equal to the surmounting of difficulties too formidable for their ordinary strength; now discouragement made

them feebler than they really were. A long and arduous journey had wearied the Israelite, so that he longed for repose; and as he knew not what fresh trials the future might unfold, his soul was greatly discouraged. But the worst feature of this despondency was, that it caused him to look to Egypt, and not toward Canaan, for relief; a sin which the Christian pilgrim has sometimes cause to lament, after a season of weariness and darkness. We may seek in the cordials which the world offers a cure for a disquieted heart, when the grace of God only can put those depressions to flight.

We may profitably meditate on the *origin, the nature, and the uses, of the discouragements which befall the pilgrims to Canaan*. The discouragements incident to the Christian, like those of the Israelite, may arise from a variety of sources; but they mainly flow from the external and internal circumstances of our being.

The aspect of the surrounding world often exerts a depressing influence on the mind. The Israelite was in a desert. Having now journeyed nearly forty years through pathless wilds, removed from the blessings of civilized life; far from Egypt, which at that period occupied a deserved pre-eminence in respect to civilization and knowledge over all other lands, it was not singular that his heart should cast from out those inhospitable and dreary solitudes of sand anxious aspirations towards the fertile valleys laved by the Nile; it was not marvellous that he should be inclined to exchange an arid desert for green fields and flowing streams. Had he known how soon he was to quit those unattractive regions, to enter the land flowing with milk and honey, he might have sustained his

heart by the hope of better things to come. But his feet still trod a burning and thorny road, and the rough passage was made yet more forbidding by the forces of the enemy that would dispute his progress, and prevent, if possible, the realization of his hopes. These circumstances were fitted to chafe his not too-well disciplined and already-fretted spirit, so that he murmured, and wished himself back to the flesh-pots of Egypt. Foolish as his desire was to return to bondage and degradation, rather than manfully endure the perils and trials of a desert journey, he is still of riper folly who, while smarting under the burdens of the cross, would fly the heavenly road and rush into the vassalage of sin.

The Christian pilgrim finds the narrow road crowded with as many obstacles as the Israelite had to encounter. The pilgrim to glory, like his Master, may be poor, and have not where to lay his head. Toiling laboriously, he may still be without the necessary comforts of life. The rich, who are surfeiting to excess amid palatial magnificence, may sometimes have their unwilling minds directed to the suffering poor, and they will yawn while listening to the recital of heart-rending scenes, for their sensibilities are blunted, and their souls have long since lost all that tender sympathy peculiar to human beings, by the grinding of the poor, through which process they have acquired their wealth. Others may look out upon a laboring and suffering world, and, though they waste thousands and tens of thousands upon extravagant dress, they will quiet their conscience, when it pleads for a toil-worn creature, by the adage, "The poor man's sleep is sweet." If it is

so, no thanks to them; but, ah! how many weary, laboring hearts does the All-seeing eye behold among the poor and neglected!

The more generous of those in affluent life may sometimes be the subjects of corroding cares and vexatious annoyances, and regard the poor and lowly as the happiest of men. Yet, wherever Providence may assign us our lot, whether in humble or affluent circumstances, everywhere are felt more or less sensibly the woes of the curse that hangs over our humanity. The beggar who has always been homeless and friendless looks up to the stately structure of marble where the rich man dwells—all is so beautiful, and the air is freighted with sweet odors that rise from rare flowers within that enclosure—and he sighs that no such a paradise of happiness ever opens its portals to receive him. Yet, disquietude may reign within those resplendent halls, and, amid their devotions to fashion and mammon, envy and strife, sullenness and discontent—those canker-worms—may destroy the peace of their souls. The hearts beating within that charming abode are human, and also taste the bitter stream of woes that sends its turbid waters through all the channels of humanity. Oh! it is not a desert, nor a plain, nor palace, nor cottage, but a *pure* heart and a contented spirit that bring abiding peace. Persons dwelling in the extremes of affluence and poverty may be so nearly alike in their troubles, that they might often change positions without diminishing or adding to their sorrows. All have, all *must* have trials. “In sorrow shalt thou eat bread all the days of thy life,” is a penalty visited upon all the children of Adam.

Whatever may be the position or birth of man, the decree is absolute and universal; so that we must all enter the kingdom of heaven through much tribulation. Even those to whom all enterprises of a worldly character succeed will not find themselves exempted from those spiritual trials that are incident to a pilgrimage to everlasting life. This world is no friend to grace. The temptations of this life are manifold and urgent, and the ever-vigilant enemy plies them with terrible energy. But there are instances of much more painful conflicts than others. There is one to whom all things fall out adversely. His well-digested plans are failures; his expectations, that seemed rational and well grounded, are blighted. He toils with all the energy of his nature, but success crowns no effort. He looks forward along the race of life, and though mountains lie between him and the object which he wishes to obtain, he knows that he has talent, energy, and a will to apply them, and once more he feels hopeful, yea, sanguine, as to the final issue of his undertaking. But he has not advanced far before difficulties multiply, and obstacles frown so sternly as to chill his hopes; all things seem to conspire against him, the road becomes intricate and dark, and his "soul is discouraged because of the way." Afflictions come, the family is stricken, his heart is bereft of its treasures, and he mourns over his hapless lot. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous," and although "God delivers him out of them all," yet feeble human nature too readily yields to its supposed inability to battle with those adversities that burst with their withering power over the cherished scenes of our earthly

homes. The race becomes the more difficult when we commence our journey in poverty, without friends and sympathy. Such an one will find his progress slow; but he hopes on, and toils till silvered with age, and the effects of overwrought faculties bring him within the shadows of the sepulchre; his struggles are fruitless, he cannot war with destiny, and his soul is discouraged because of the way. It may be imagined by some that outward circumstances exert little or no influence upon the spiritual condition of man. But this opinion is not supported by philosophy or the gospel. That the true Christian will rise above all these hinderances there is no question; but they are like millstones, whose weight will retard the soul's progress in the way of life. Afflictions, misfortunes, and worldly calamities, while they drive the soul to the bosom of Christ, also suggest many painful questions, and fill the mind with doubts and darkness.

But, apart from those influences upon the soul that flow from worldly sources, there are moral evils that annoy and weary the human spirit. The friendships of earth are often false and fickle. You have misplaced your confidence, and your affections have been made the merchandise of the base. You have entrusted a priceless treasure to the keeping of another, and he has forged it into a weapon to pierce your heart. If, through the exercise of your talents, you have risen to an exalted position and reaped a harvest of brilliant successes, envy goeth about to strip you of your honors. There is no security against vexations which make life a weariness. The journey becomes painful in some form or other, and if the hope of eternal life

does not shed its glorious foretastes through the heart, "the soul of the people is discouraged because of the way."

But, aside from all things else, the experience of the Christian pilgrim teaches him that, within his own nature, there are found elements which breathe a discouraging influence over his mind. The culture of the heart is a difficult, sometimes a painful work. Patient, unwearied exertions are required to curb its passions, to chasten its desires, and to mould it into the image of Christ. There is going forward in his heart a constant struggle between nature and grace, the spirit and the flesh contending earnestly for the mastery. The things that are seen tempt the eye from the unseen realities of the world to come, and the heart is not easily and abidingly fixed on God. The path of the pilgrim is compassed by many things that challenge human love, and so strong is the tendency to be satisfied with these tangible objects, that men, after a few feeble efforts, sometimes give the struggle over, and are drifted to ruin unresistingly by the tide of corruption that is rolling its dark waves over all the earth. The Christian must also have the gentleness of his Lord, and the temper is stubborn and may cause him many sorrows. Though chastened and bound in the golden fetters of grace, a sudden provocation may cause it to burst its restraints, and breathe the desolating flames of passion over the spirit. And, after we have succeeded in bringing all the faculties of our being into subjection to the gospel, so that the whole man is fully consecrated to God, and the spirit instinct with the life of Christ, there are incidents transpiring

beyond the range of what is strictly personal, that painfully affect the soul.

Imperfections in those we cherish wound us in their reacting power. The prophet who had called to repentance and yearned over his brethren, became discouraged by their obduracy, when he exclaimed — “I will no more speak to this people.” How sad is the experience of many of Christ’s ambassadors at this day? Amid the solemnities of the sanctuary, and under the impressive exhibitions of the momentous concerns of eternity, men remain unmoved as the cold marble, and callous as adamant. The minister of God urges high and holy considerations, offers motives the most commanding in their interests, and associated with the retributions of eternity, but he discovers no change in his hearers. Some are totally indifferent; others scorn the message of heaven. Among those who are the friends of Jesus, there is often found a languid piety and a low type of excellence, when exemplary lives and a godly conversation should adorn their characters. He grows not weary in his work, but his soul is discouraged by the carelessness of those whom he is striving to lead to heaven. The riches of the gospel are unfolded, but there is little softening of the asperities of character, no great growth and blending of the exalted graces of religion. There is one as fretful and as stubborn as it is possible for him to be; another whose heart is not yet the empire of holy love, for the slightest jar on his sensibilities settles a thunder-cloud on his countenance that abides, with forbidding aspect, for weeks and months, and with mutterings, accompanied with flashes of wrath, he moves

about, a melancholy illustration of a self-deceived soul.

The children of God are conscious of keen distress, occasioned by abounding iniquity, and often does the prayer rise to heaven—"Oh! that the wickedness of the wicked might come to an end." Among transgressors may be found, perhaps, children, friends and companions, who, by their impiety, place a crushing weight upon hearts that love them. They have counselled, entreated, prayed, yet do precious ones walk in the road to death. The mournful cry of David's lacerated heart—"Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son, would God I had died for thee"—was doubly bitter in view of the hopeless death and the miserable eternity which had become the portion of the guilty son and rebel. And like painful incidents still befall the good in their heavenward journey, and their soul is discouraged because of the way.

The hostility of a sinful world infuses into the heart of the Christian pilgrim a spirit of despondency. The Israelite found the Edomites so unfriendly that they would not grant them permission to pass through their territory. It was while they traversed a very dreary region of country to get beyond Edom, that the soul of the people was discouraged. There is constant and inveterate opposition to the Church from the depraved and openly wicked. Paul mourned over the afflictions caused to the Church by the wicked. Not appreciating the blessings that Christianity brings, men would destroy the fountain of their most valued gifts. Without gratitude, because destitute of love to Him who is the spring of all their joys, they delight

in the infliction of wounds on the body of Christ. "There is no agreement between Christ and Belial." The principles of the Divine government are resisted at every step in their progress towards a complete ascendancy over all unrighteousness. The Christian is in sympathy with the Redeemer's cause, and is affected by all the Church's afflictions, while he mourns over the perishing around him. He beholds some at ease in Zion, and others rushing with indiscreet zeal "where angels fear to tread," and thus injuring the cause they wish to benefit, and a profound sorrow often fills his heart. Looking at the various sources from which difficulties do arise, and surveying the obstructions that impede his progress towards his everlasting home, he has times and seasons when "his soul is much discouraged because of the way."

How should these discouragements be met? What should be the bearing of the pilgrim while he endures them? And what purposes are they designed to subserve? These are inquiries in which all have a deep interest. They must be met with a brave heart, with an humble spirit, yet a confident hope in Jesus to overcome and conquer all difficulties. If the road is rugged, and the burdens oppressive, the traveller to glory must remember former deliverances, recall former helps from heaven, and thus, casting the thoughts on luminous points, to Elims already past, gather strength for present emergencies. All discouragements may be overcome by faith. Thousands now harping God's praises have surmounted the very obstacles that frown defiance on the pilgrim. Poverty, persecution, fire and sword have not been able to keep

the great multitude out of the heavenly Canaan. The road is neither long nor destitute of comforts. The manna fell all the way for the Israelite, and it was his sin, and the cause of his discouragement, that he allowed his grosser nature to loathe the heavenly food; and so the soul of the Christian only sinks exhausted to the earth when his faith is feeble and his prayers are not fervent. The Lord of glory sends these trials by the way to wean from earth. Heirs of a kingdom, and sons and daughters of the Almighty, He makes the earth a desert, that we may hasten forward to Paradise. It is, after all, a merciful dispensation that blights our beautiful things and robes in darkness much of our earthly life; for the less we have of earthly comforts, the more earnestly will we seek the rest that remaineth to the people of God. Misfortunes, afflictions and disappointments, though now borne with difficulty, will one day be transformed into jewels, and cherished as the brightest ornaments in a crown of life. While our strength is altogether inadequate to battle with the calamities that sweep over our life, we should cherish the conviction that our help is in the Lord. Meekly borne, our trials will sweeten the final hour; not only making us willing to die, to escape this scene of turmoil, but they will minister to us a weight of glory by exercising us in righteousness. These discouragements have the good office, also, of carrying the thoughts of the pilgrim to heaven. There he shall weep no more, neither have any more pain, and the inhabitant shall no more say, I am sick. In yonder blissful home we will find our present discouragements delightful reminiscences; they will consti-

tute exalted themes of praise. Up, then, desponding, way-worn pilgrim, and run with patience the race set before you. The glorious Canaan awaits you; a fadeless crown is provided; yea, a throne and kingdom await every faithful pilgrim to Mount Zion. "He that endureth to the end shall be saved."

CHAPTER XXV.

THE INTERCESSORS OF THE PILGRIMS—MOSES INTERCEDES FOR THE ISRAELITE, JESUS FOR THE CHRISTIAN.

“Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, according unto the greatness of thy mercy.”—NUMBERS xiv. 13-10.

“If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who was made a propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.”—1 JOHN ii. 1.

THE necessity of an intercessor is often felt and forcibly illustrated in man's experience. Sin has occasioned so many disorders in the human constitution, that even the most devout and holy often mourn over their short-comings and imperfections. The depravity of our nature is deeply seated, and so aggravated in its form as to send a paralyzing influence over all the faculties, making their incessant exercise in holiness a most difficult work. We need not present any labored argument to prove that all have need of the mediation of some holy being with the offended Sovereign, whose laws we have broken. It is a want universally felt and proclaimed by pagans, in their manifold rites, penances and offerings to appease the unknown, but offended being, whose voice is heard within them. The patriarch lamented that there was no days-man between him and his Maker, and all the offerings of

the Hebrews serve to confirm our convictions, that man must have an advocate with the Father.

Moses was instructed, when they had dwelt for sometime in the wilderness of Paran, to select twelve rulers, one from each tribe, and send them forward to take a view of the promised land. The object of this exploring party was to obtain some idea of the country and its products, to ascertain the character of the people and their means of defence. Ten of these men brought back an unfavorable report. They represented the land as unproductive: "a land that eats up its inhabitants:" they also gave an exaggerated account of the strength of their towns, and declared that the children of Anek, who were giants, dwelt there. Cowardly and faithless, they tried to discourage the multitude and excite a spirit of discontent and rebellion. But Joshua and Caleb were men of a different mould; the stirrings of a courageous and patriotic spirit is breathed in their report. They labored to allay the excitement produced by the others; they declared that the inhabitants were few and feeble, that the land was rich in its productions, and pointed to the massive clusters of grapes that they had brought. They said: "Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it." A multitude whose fears and resentments are excited, are, however, not easily quieted. Like the angry sea lashed into fury by the storm which obeys but one voice, and is awed into repose by Him only who formed it, so the attempts of these pious and patriotic men to inspire their brethren with hope and courage were as fruitless as if they had spoken to the winds and waves. The infuriated crowd upbraid-

ed Moses and Aaron, and took up stones to stone these faithful men and their leaders, and were about to appoint a captain to conduct them back to Egypt. At this terrible crisis the glory of the Lord appeared upon the tabernacle—the people were quieted. “And the Lord said unto Moses : How long will this people provoke me ? and how long will it be ere they will believe me, for all the signs I have showed them ? I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a nation mightier than they.” This was the tenth time they had rebelled against God ; and, after the amazing exhibitions of his power and goodness, He might very justly have blotted them from the face of the earth. But their noble leader interposed, threw himself into the breach, and urged such arguments in his intercessions, as eventually caused the Lord to spare them as a nation, though not without punishment ; for all above the age of twenty years were doomed to die in the wilderness, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb. The ten spies who brought back an evil report were smitten with the plague, and died on the spot.

The intercessions of Moses are fervent and importunate. When the Lord said : “I will destroy this people,” Moses urged : “Then will the Egyptians hear it !” This may appear a singular reason to stay God’s avenging hand, yet it proved a potent plea. “Then the Egyptians will hear it !” And what of that ? Why should the Sovereign of the universe regard the taunts of insolent idolators ? Their ridicule could not injure the Divine character, nor detract from His glory. But then the cause of human redemption

will suffer, the purposes of mercy will be retarded until another nation is raised up through whom these may be carried to a successful issue. The apparent failure to conduct Israel to their promised rest, would make an unfavorable impression upon idolatrous nations who were to be affected by every step of progress on the part of the Hebrews. To destroy them would have emboldened scoffers, and confirmed others in their idolatry. "And they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land, for they have heard that thou Lord art among this people; that thou Lord art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them by day-time in a pillar of cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night. Now if thou wilt kill all this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee will speak, saying: 'Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which he swore unto them; therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness.'" It would diminish the power and majesty of God in the sight of the heathen world. The honor of the Divine government would have a cloud cast over it. Such startling miracles, such unknown interpositions as the one which attended the deliverance of the Hebrews from the oppressions of tyrannical masters, and all the wonders that glowed along their path, the fame of these things must have gone out over all the earth, and that majestic symbol of Jehovah's presence, the pillar of fire, must have been seen by many, and convinced them that Israel's God was the only true God. For the sake of the perishing, the Lord is a jealous God, and for His name's sake often carried out de-

signs of mercy towards His people of which they were totally undeserving.

Moses next appeals to the character of God, as a ground of hope that He would spare the guilty: "And now I beseech thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying: The Lord is long suffering and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression. Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt even until now." God was moved by this touching prayer, it laid hold upon the attributes of His character: "And he said I have pardoned according to thy word. But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." A prayer that confesses all, and throws the soul upon the clemency of Jehovah is never offered in vain. The power and majesty of God are glorious in creation, but shine with far greater lustre in the work of redemption. The intercessions of Moses prevailed, saving the offenders from the eternal displeasure of the Lord, and while He did not remit that temporal chastisement which their rebellion merited, but denied them entrance into the earthly Canaan, we trust they were admitted into the heavenly rest. But this was not the only occasion when his mediation saved Israel. When Korah, Abirah and Dathan fomented a rebellion, and infected some hundreds with their spirit, Moses rises up, humility and majesty blending in his character, as he stood a mediator between God and the congregation. The language of these rebels would be suddenly taken up by others, and they might soon have joined the conspirators in their de-

fiant words: "Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, and the Lord is among them; wherefore, then, lift you up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?" Language that was fitted to incite the discontented to rebel against the authority of Moses and Aaron.

When the Lord desired Moses and Aaron to separate themselves from the congregation that he might consume them, "They fell upon their faces and said, O, God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?" It is probable that even many who had not openly joined these pretenders had been restive under the wholesome restraints imposed by their leader, and whose hearts might have nursed the thought of overthrowing the authority of Moses, and these would have gone over upon the first symptoms of successful rebellion. But, for all who had not openly rebelled Moses interceded, and they were commanded to separate themselves from the company of Korah and Abiram. The Lord appeared to vindicate the character of His servants. When the rebels went to minister with their censers at the tabernacle, lurid flames burst forth and consumed the rash adventurers. The earth also opened and swallowed up all the company of Abiram and Korah. By this signal and complete overthrow, God reproved their sin. When they murmured against God, because they had no flesh to eat, though they were fed on angels' food, the Lord let loose upon them the flying fiery serpents, whose sting caused the death of many. Again, they fly for help to their injured intercessor, crying, "We have sinned against the Lord,

pray for us that we do not all perish." "And Moses prayed for them." The Lord answered his supplications and directed him to provide a remedy for the poison of the serpents. He formed a brazen serpent, and, having raised it on a pole, the sufferers were directed to look upon it as the appointed means of God to heal them. On many other occasions did he plead their cause. Endowed with such exalted capacities, and called to such a glorious mission, he doubtless interceded for them daily. He was the meekest of men, and, forgetting all the reproaches with which they loaded him from time to time, he never neglected to pray for them. Yea, doubtless, even while ascending Mount Nebo to die, and while looking from its pinnacle over into the land of promise, his supplications went up to God in their behalf. There, alone with God, he poured out his intercessions, and begged the Lord to bring them safely into the land of their fathers. And what revelations God may have granted to His faithful servant we know not, but surely it is consonant with all the Divine proceedings to suppose that there he enjoyed a panoramic view of the future history of his people. Their settlement in Palestine, their growth, their kingly palaces and glorious temple, their position in the family of nations, and the glory of that *redemption*, already promised to Abraham by the Lord, when He said, "In thy seed shall all nations be blessed," all passed before his vision, and his own spirit participated in that promise to such an extent that, when his eyes closed on the beauties of the land of his fathers, his spirit was wafted to the Paradise of God to enjoy that recompense of reward for which he

rejected the throne of Egypt. A closing scene of his earthly career, eminently fitting to the eventful and brilliant life now merged into a beautiful immortality ! From hardships to rest, from humiliation and suffering to glory, dying in full view of the earthly Canaan, while his soul took wing for the trees and the river of life, to dwell forever amid the glories of the New Jerusalem. The institutions ordained of God under Moses perpetuated the intercessory office in the High Priesthood, which continued until the coming of our Divine high priest, Jesus Christ, who offered himself once for all.

From this historical analysis of the intercessor of the Israelite we pass to a consideration of the Christian's Mediator. The pilgrim now, on his way to the celestial Canaan, needs one to intercede for him. However vigilant he may be, he will often accuse himself of delinquencies that require the Divine forgiveness before he can enjoy peace of mind : for, such are the temptations by which he is plied, and so manifold are the weaknesses of human nature, that he has daily cause to mourn over sins of omission and commission. If, by fervent, habitual prayer, his mind rises into sweet communion with heaven, the higher he ascends on the mount of spiritual excellence, the more distinct will be his apprehension of the extent and spirituality of God's law ; so that he will have a corresponding knowledge of the exceeding sinfulness of his heart. A man who stands at the foot of some mountain may cast his eye over the landscape and take in a general view of the country, but only as he ascends will he be able to perceive objects in their distinctive characters : and

thus, as the soul rises heavenward, will the impurities of earth and human nature become more and more manifest. Paradoxical as it may seem to the carnal mind, or to the lukewarm professor, it is nevertheless true, that, as we advance in the work of sanctification, we will see more and more of the depravity of the heart. These revelations of personal imperfections are consequent upon enlarged views of the absolute holiness of God. Isaiah, when the glory and purity of heaven flashed upon his vision, fell to the earth and exclaimed, "Wo is me, for I am a man of unclean lips, and dwell among a people of unclean lips, and mine eyes have seen the Lord of hosts!" The illustrious apostle to the Gentiles, so abundant in holy labors, in fastings and prayer, cries out, "Oh! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death;" and such has been the experience of the most holy men, in every age of the church. Out of heaven there is no perfect purity, no absolute holiness: hence the frequent exhortations to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus, "to press forward towards the mark of the prize of our high calling of God." Sanctification is a progressive work, "for we are changed from glory to glory as by the spirit of God." Besides those sins of infirmity that are revealed to us by conscience, there may be many imperfections that escape our notice altogether, but which are manifest to the scrutiny of the ever-wakeful eye that flashes into the deepest recesses of thought and emotion, and which require the intercessory pleadings of our adorable Head. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." This is a

consoling assurance to the pious soul, and keeps it from despairing. "For, if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." Such are the declarations of the Holy Ghost concerning the mediatorial office of our Lord Jesus.

The Redeemer of the world, in His official character, sustains highly interesting relations to the Christian pilgrim: Christ is his prophet or teacher, and at His feet the pilgrim daily sits to learn the lessons of salvation. He also is his king, having established His throne in the believer's heart, and ruling in his affections and thoughts. As a High Priest, He still offers His atoning blood, which cleanses from all sin, for those who have taken up the cross and follow the Lamb whithersoever He leadeth. In the exercise of His eternal priesthood, He stands in the presence of the Father. He offers our petitions sprinkled with His own blood, and breathes supplications in our behalf. There are many intimations and emblems in the Scriptures of Christ's mediations for us in heaven. The high priest, under the Jewish economy, went into the Holy of holies once a year, having his garments sprinkled with the blood of animals offered in sacrifice; that he might make atonement for the sins of the people; but the Apostle, speaking of the more exalted and

meritorious offerings of Christ, says, "that they are a perpetual sacrifice." But our Lord occupies even a higher rank than the priest; for, as Moses spake to God face to face, so Jesus makes intercessions for us in the glorious presence of Divine Majesty. As Abraham interceded for Sodom, and Moses for Israel, so does Jesus plead for the guilty. He appears in the court of heaven for us, carries our suit to the altars of eternal justice, and pleads His merits in our behalf. He is there, in our nature, with that body marred by stripes and thorns, and with wounds received on Calvary, and that soul which he poured out as an oblation to offended Justice. His presence in our humanity is a powerful plea for the exercise of the Divine clemency towards sinners. The presence of His glorified humanity is evidence, moreover, of the full and perfect satisfaction rendered to the law, for, only after He had fulfilled His part of the covenant, could He be exalted to the mediatorial throne at God's right hand.

His intercessions are made for the whole world; for those who are cumberers in the vineyard of the Lord, for the unholy and the unprofitable. In the dialogue introduced in the parable of the barren fig-tree, between the master and the dresser of the vineyard, we have a picture of the sinner, and an illustration of the intercessory supplications of our Lord for the unfruitful. Justice demands the uprooting and destruction of the unprofitable tree, but the compassionate husbandman begs that it may be spared another year. He said, I will dig about it and nourish it, and if it bear fruit, well! but if not, then thou shalt cut it down. Oh! how often is the suspended sword of Justice stayed by

the intercessions of Jesus? Does He not now plead for that unprofitable disciple? He prays for His people. On the evening of His betrayal, He told Peter that Satan would try him and sift him; but, He adds, "I have prayed for thee." Though Peter fell, yet was repentance given, and he recovered from his sad relapse. He is represented as offering phials of incense before the eternal Throne, which are the prayers of the saints. His ministry in heaven procures all the blessings and successes of His church on earth: and those ministrations will be continued, until the glory of the church militant gleams through all the earth, and the anthems of the redeemed here below rise and blend with the hallelujahs that swell in lofty grandeur around the throne of Deity.

Blessed consolation, Jesus prays for me! He knows all my wants, sees every danger to which I am exposed, and throws the defences of His omnipotence around me. Cognizant of every grief that rends the heart, of every sorrow whose shadow falls on the soul, and having been tempted, He knows how to succor those who are tried. Whatever cup of wo I may be called to drink, I am assured that He knows its bitterness, and also that the grace secured for me through His intercessions will turn its gall into honey, and its wormwood into delicious nectar. When my spirit droops under the weight of its afflictions, my path leads through deep valleys, dark and desolate—when violent storms break around my head, in all, and through all, I hear the voice that stilled the tempest, and quieted the waves, saying, "fear not, it is I." When the friendships of earth dis-

solve, like unsubstantial mist, and the love of brothers or sisters is changed into cold neglect—when deserted, scorned, persecuted, I find in Jesus “A friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” Away, then, ye dark apprehensions, ye fears of ultimate failure of heaven; for “who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died.” Avaunt, ye doubts that, spectre-like, intrude into my holy hours; to the winds, all ye misgivings: my advocate is with the Father, Jesus prays for me! And not only does He pray for me, but He has left the magnificent promise, “Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, believing, ye shall receive.” Oh! glorious privilege to pray! Exalted favor, for a worm to approach the Majesty of heaven at all! but to ask for Christ’s sake, and to know that whatsoever we ask in that august name He will do for us, this is indeed an exaltation of favor that could only originate in infinite love. Why, then, should the disciples of the Holy One fear the world or the devil? “Behold thy God, O Israel!” Look up, ye tempted weary ones, Jesus is on the throne! Ask not who bids the morning rise, or who causes the wind to blow; Jesus, on the throne of universal dominion, decrees all events, orders all the providences which affect His people; and, as He sees the end from the beginning, He knows full well that the most afflictive dispensations will issue in unspeakable, rapturous glory. With such a friend and intercessor, we may bid adieu to fear; and, where we cannot take within the range of our vision the entire scope of His providential dealings, we can trust Him, and rest confidently on His word. He holdeth back

the face of His throne, and spreadeth a cloud upon it : still we know that righteousness and judgment are the foundation of that throne, and that infinite love and mercy shine through the administration of His mediatorial reign. My blessed Lord, my glorious intercessor, I lay my soul at Thy mercy-seat ; spurn not this poor offering, accept a heart that has known few earthly joys, that is often desolate and sad ; fill it with Thy peace ; give it rest, rest from its sorrows, rest in heaven ! Thou hast shown me that I must soon lay down this tabernacle, my pilgrimage is well-nigh run : are not the tokens of the night of death about me ? What mean these infirmities ? Are not these pangs that strike my heart like cold daggers and cause it to flutter as the affrighted bird, thy harbingers, O death ! Yes, the end is coming ; eternity seems nearer than it once was ; in my silent hours I hear angelic strains ; the echoes of melodies not made on earth resound through the chambers of my soul. O my soul ! how wilt thou meet the final hour ? Thou hast no goodness, no hope, but in Christ. But He is an Almighty Saviour ! I have no merit before God, but He is become my righteousness. I have no power to battle with death, but He giveth us the victory. I know not the way through the dark valley, but He, the glorious fore-runner, has gone through it and left a lingering glory upon its shadow to light us up to everlasting day. Adorable Intercessor of sinners and pilgrims, bring us all, as thy sons and daughters, to glory ? Thou art our only hope, may Thy prayers avail for us.

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling."

* * *

"While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyelids close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
See Thee on Thy judgment throne,
Rock of Ages cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."

CHAPTER XXVI.

CANAAN IN VIEW : THE SONG OF THE PILGRIMS AFTER THEY HAVE CROSSED THE DESERT, IN WHICH THEY CELEBRATE THE DIVINE GOODNESS THAT CROWNED THEIR JOURNEY.

Read Deuteronomy xxxii.

THAT was a thrilling scene when the elders, and officers, and people were summoned into the presence of Moses? What a spectacle to angels? What a grandeur lingers on the sacred page about that assemblage, as it rises to the contemplation of succeeding generations? The Israelites are beyond the desert; they stand on the borders of Canaan. Their noble leader and law-giver—the man who made Pharaoh tremble, whose wand sent desolating plagues over Egypt, divided the sea, caused streams to gush from the flinty rock—that man, wonderful in deeds and glorious in strength, whose voice rang like the voice of thunder through the armies of God's chosen, met for the last time those whom he had guided through so many perils. Having reached the terminus of his journey on earth, as well as through the desert, Moses composed this triumphal song, in which he recounts the mercies vouchsafed to him and his people, and with deep emotions their voices blend with his in its sublime utterance. At the conclusion of this Psalm Moses was to ascend the mount to die. Never had man more successfully fulfilled his

mission, never was there crowded within the compass of human existence, in one lifetime, such a work as he had accomplished. To us, as to the Hebrews, this event casts a shade over the picture. Who could not not wish one who had borne himself so bravely through all his eventful life, might now, as he had brought the people to the verge of the promised land, himself enter and dwell awhile amid the blooming vales of Palestine? Such was assuredly the desire of the Hebrews; and because it was not realized they were greatly distressed. We can readily believe that the occasion was, to Moses, in the highest degree solemn, knowing as he did that he would raise his voice no more to encourage, to admonish, and reprove Israel. But he had written his laws, and commanded the Levites to put the Holy Record into the ark, that, after his death, these lessons of wisdom might continue their influence on their destiny as a nation. How beautiful the close of life amid such a scene! Loved as a father, venerated as a teacher, and obeyed as a ruler and king, every heart cherished him with its holiest affections. Like Jesus, the glorious Captain of our salvation, who entered into heaven before his disciples, thus Moses, after taking a view of the earthly Canaan, ascends into the heavenly.

The final song of Moses opens with an appeal to heaven and to earth to give audience. It was a sublime spectacle, well worthy of the earnest attention of heaven to its transactions. It was eminently fitting that all should hearken to that song. "Give ear, O ye heavens." The whole universe is summoned around the man of God. Angels had been actively engaged in that great deliverance whose consummation was

about to be celebrated. Angels had ministered to the poor bondsmen of Pharaoh. They encamped about the huts on the fields of Goshen, and sustained the spirits of the hard-toiling multitude. They guarded the little wicker basket, and watched over its precious treasure. That helpless infant on the Nile was the nursling of angels, when a mother's care had to be withdrawn, and it was committed to the keeping of a sleepless Providence. Angels—those ministers of God in the most exalted sense—were unquestionably active in the calamities that emptied wide-spread woes upon the land of the Pharaohs. The angel of God went forth and smote the first-born in every household, during that night when a doleful wail of woe came up from every Egyptian home! These unseen spirits, these flames of fire, reared a wall of defence around the fleeing Israelites, making it light to the pursued, but darkness to the pursuers. These sons of light were with them in the desert, moving in joyful groups along with the marching hosts, and by night they were as a wall of fire around the camp. At Sinai they mingled in that sublime scene when Jehovah held audience with earth. The apostle says, "The law was given through the ministrations of angels." What particular offices they had in the giving of the law we know not; but, the Supreme Sovereign, around whose seat Daniel saw ministering angels by thousands and tens of thousands, would not rear His throne on Sinai without bringing the attendants of His court. One of the most cheering promises to the Hebrews was that in which God assures them of angelic guidance. "And I will send mine angel before thee, that he may

bring thee to the land which I have given you." They have been active co-workers with the Holy Trinity in the work of Redemption, from the feeblest manifestations of its beginning on earth in Egypt, up to the present period, when they minister to the heirs of salvation; and they will continue their friendly offices to man, up to that fearful day when the heavens shall pass away; and, in the transactions of the day of retributive justice, they shall go out upon all the earth to separate the good from the evil. "The reapers are the angels, and they shall gather the tares and bind them into bundles and cast them into fire, but the wheat into my garner." It was, therefore, with great propriety that their attention was invoked to the recital of God's mercies and of his vengeance. The creatures of God's intelligent universe are closely united. The world of spirits blends with the world of mortals; a very thin veil hides those sublime mysteries of spirit-life from the observations of man; so that even now, while proclaiming the wonderful doings of our God, we may call upon the dwellers in heaven to hearken to the record of our experience. Yes, "Give ear, O! ye heavens!" ye thrones and principalities, ye dominions and powers, while we analyze the sublime song of the Lord's merciful dealings with our race. And thou, oh! earth, do thou also hearken to the glories of redemption, prophetically uttered in this song! Yes, hear; for, from this nation—now toiling through the desert, whose triumphant strains are perfumed with the odors that are wafted from the bloom of Canaan—from this people there shall go forth a power to subdue kingdoms, to renovate and to beautify the earth

with the holiness of God! Hear, oh! earth, for thy pollution shall be washed away by the crimson streams that gush from the mount of Calvary. Hear, for thy anguished heart shall find health and rest in the balm of Gillead! Angels and men, hear! "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew." The doctrine of salvation is in its origin and properties as the rain. It comes down from heaven, God is its father, and, coming from above, it carries with it the heavenly and the divine. As the rain watereth the earth, and causes it to bring forth rich and varied products, clothing the plain with golden harvests, the hills with springing grass, and covering forest and field, hill and dale, with the bloom of life and beauty, so does the news of salvation quicken our stricken humanity, making it glorious by ornamenting it with the graces of religion. As I look out upon the green and flowery earth, rolling so joyously along, vocal with the strains of a joyful creation, while my senses are regaled by that wealth of delicious aroma poured around me by millions of unfolding flowers and myriads of bursting blossoms, I ask nor poet nor angel to describe more gorgeously or teach me more impressively the renovating, the grateful and glorious effects of the doctrine of redemption through atoning blood. Even now, that gospel that lies enveloped in the song of Moses, as the germ is enfolded by the coating of the seed, is causing "the desert to bud and blossom as the rose." Ay, as the abundant showers that have robed the earth in her magnificent apparel and adorned Nature with her splendid chaplets, making this Spring morning lovely beyond utterance, so has the gospel

made the opening of our immortality fragrant and beautiful, by giving to regenerated souls the sweetness and comeliness of the rose of Sharon, and the purity and sweetness of the lily. And when the rain has done its office, and its fountain is sealed for a little while, the gentle but refreshing dew follows with its mission of blessing. Hear, therefore, oh! earth—ye weary inhabitants of the world! for God does not only give converting grace in copious showers, but when these have filled the soil with moisture, where the Lord has planted these germs of immortality, the dews descend nightly to refresh and nourish them. For the righteous, the renewed soul, has “its root spread out by the waters, and the dew lies all night upon its branch.” The truths of salvation, accompanied by daily supplies of grace, subserve the same benevolent purposes in the moral creations of God, as the “small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass.”

Angels and men give ear, that ye may publish the message throughout the universe, and “declare the name of the Lord,” that all may ascribe greatness to our God. “He is the Rock, his work is perfect.” The figure carries with it the idea of strength, as well as stability, and is also made in its Hebrew origin to signify the producing cause. A rebel world was tossing and foaming out its own shame, and the waves of its passions raging and rolling high, casting their foul spray into the face of heaven in malignant resistance to His authority, yet His throne stood unshaken as the rock in mid-ocean. And when nations rose up against Him or His people, they were crushed and broken into

countless fragments, as the angry wave is shattered upon the firm rock. Moses could not forget the strength of God's right arm; he recalled the many instances of signal triumph over their enemies through the assistance of the Lord. God is unchangeable, and, through all coming time, His people will find their hopes and faith upon an immutable foundation, if reared on the promises of God. Whatever changes men and nations may undergo, the God of Israel, the Maker, and Preserver, and Redeemer of men will retain His spotless purity, His inflexible justice, and His exhaustless benevolence.

I may not enter into a full discussion of this exalted Psalm: let us glance at a few points—indicate those outlines of that vast compass of truth and thought, illumined by its Divine light. This song commemorates the glorious past, celebrates the auspicious present, and links itself with the eventful future, until it will be incorporated with eternity. “When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance; when He separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.” “For the Lord is the portion of his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert place, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.” The Hebrews were, by God's sovereign pleasure alone, elevated above others; they had no claims upon the Divine favor; they were children of wrath, even as others. The desert place where he was found is an image of the unattractiveness of the moral condition of Jacob, destitute of all moral

excellence; nay, a waste howling wilderness, *i. e.* not only passively wicked, in a torpid state of corruption, but, though a moral desert, the humanity that composed this favored nation was swept by fierce passions. Utterly destitute, helpless and guilty, God so loved the world, that He separated Abraham from the rest of mankind, and made him the father of a nation through whom Jehovah would send out those influences, whose agency might reclaim this revolted world to its rightful Sovereign. An ever-wakeful Providence presided over the infancy of that nation. "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them up, beareth them on her wings: So the Lord alone did lead him."

A more touching image of the Divine care could not be conceived, since the eagle feels the most intense interest in her offspring, and watches over them with a devotion that never flags. But all comparisons fail when we try to picture the loving-kindness of God. It is high as the heavens, wide as the universe, filling immensity with the benefactions of the Most High; boundless and exhaustless, who can measure the Divine beneficence? I cannot utter its greatness, though I feel, in common with everything that exists, that it is the spring of all joy, of all gladness, and glory, that pervade the limitless empire of Jehovah. "The Lord's portion is his people." He cherished them through the feebleness of their infancy, and led them out into the desert to show them His wonders, to sustain them from his immediate munificence without the intervention of natural law, that they might know that they should never want while relying on His resources.

The prophet foretells, however, the sad effects of their unexampled prosperity after they are securely located in the land of promise. After causing them to ride on the high places of the earth, that they might eat the increase of the field, gather honey and oil from the rock, in the midst of their mercies they grew restive, gave way to their depravity, and "forsook God which made them, and lightly esteemed the Rock of their salvation." "They provoked God to jealousy with strange gods; with abominations they provoked him to anger." They sacrificed even unto devils, to gods newly come up, and of the Rock that begat them they were unmindful." "And when the Lord saw it, he abhorred them, and he said I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be." "I will move them to jealousy with those who are no people: For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains." "I will heap mischiefs upon them; I will spend mine arrows upon them." Their idolatry and departure from their God, would be attended with those dire calamities that waste and desolate a land. Such, too, was their experience, terror within and the sword without, destroying the young man and the virgin, the suckling and the man of gray hairs. "Were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy, lest their adversaries should behave themselves strangely, and lest they should say, our hand is high and the Lord has not done this, I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men." It was the honor of the Divine government, and not because they did

not deserve the penalty, that they were not doomed to utter annihilation. The ungodly nations would make a boast of their destruction as though it had been the work of man. But the Lord had no pleasure in their ruin; He remembered that they were dust, and His yearnings are breathed even in His threatenings. He leaves them not without hope, that however far they might wander from heaven, however deeply they should fall, they could recur to the gracious assurances given in the valedictory address of Moses, and return to the source of their strength. "Oh! that they were wise, that they understood this;" that in obedience there is safety and strength, that in rebellion there is weakness and ruin. How should one, animated with grace, and nerved with Divine strength, chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight. For the enemies of God have no resources in idols, their warfare upon His people is madness, and must issue disastrously when Israel contends in the strength of Jehovah, "For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges." The heathen, both princes and people, saw the displays of Almighty power, and knew that whatever combination of strength might be exerted against the Lord's hosts it would prove fruitless, and that all the weapons raised against them would be shattered and pierce the hands that wielded them. Israel would be convinced of this as well as the heathen. When the chosen people, that were a choice vine of the Lord's planting, should intermingle with their idolatrous neighbors and reap the bitter fruits of their transgression, they would find it as the poison of asps; "for it is an evil and a bitter thing to

sin against God." And when they should be suitably humbled and turn with true penitence to the Rock of their strength, He would heal their backslidings, "and repent himself concerning his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone." Then He would again lift them up and exalt them to their lost dominion. He would turn the fierceness of His wrath upon their persecutors, and utterly destroy them. He would demonstrate the futility of resistance to His authority, and proclaim by the majesty of those Providential dispensations, that overturn thrones and dash to pieces the haughty oppressor, while they elevate the humble to the high places of earth, that He alone is God. They should, aye, they did see, the footsteps of the Almighty, as He moved in the greatness of His strength through His vast dominions. What a sublime grandeur is thrown about the scene of the Lord's assertion of His supreme sovereignty! "I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live forever. If I whet my glittering sword, and my hand take hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies." "I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh."

The enemies of God may afflict His church, and carry desolation into His heritage, but the day of retribution will come. "Their foot shall slide in due time, for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste." All this was verified in the experience of Israel, and will be witnessed on a much more comprehensive scale, in the retributions of that day that shall burn as an oven. Faith now looks to that triumphant period when the purposes of Divine mercy shall flash with the glory of

their longed-for consummation, and when the inhabitants of the earth, and the sparkling multitudes around the eternal throne, shall roll the triumphant pæan of victory along the arches of the universe, in a voice like unto the royal thunder—"Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." To that period did His eye look, as the prophet summoned the nations of the world to a jubilee, to celebrate the conquests of the cross, and the deliverance of the earth from the dominion of sin—"Rejoice, oh, ye nations, with his people; for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful to his land and to his people." Thus did the man of God sing his last song to and with his people. Admonishing them to set their hearts unto all the words which he testified among them that day, which they should command their children to observe and to do. "For it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life; and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land." A remembrance of God's goodness would keep them steadfast in His service; for, while it would keep alive their gratitude for favors received, it would also cause them to dread the displeasure of that great Being who had wrought such things for them. With this noble monument of his piety, his wisdom, and devotion to his people and to his God, he bids adieu to his beloved flock. He ascends the mountain where he was to meet his last enemy, calm, resigned, yet brave, even in the hour of death. There, on Mount Nebo, with angels to minister around his death-couch, his great soul burst the walls of its mortal prison, and rose to the bosom of God. Noble hero! stern,

yet tender; the meekest of men; yet, excluded from Canaan for thy hasty words at Meribah-Kadesh, that, while doing homage to thy genius, we might know that thou wert human, and not a God; still, art thou so far exalted in moral excellence above ordinary men, that they may not minister at thy burial—God and His angels consign thy body, that temple of the Holy Ghost, to the sepulchre! Though no man knoweth his grave, yet has he built a lasting monument in the complicated, the magnificent polity, of the nation that he founded. What if that once glorious monument which reflected the splendor of Judah's kings, is strewn in broken masses all over God's earth, and the foot of the tyrant treads upon these living fragments? they will once again be gathered by the Lord of Moses to the holy city, and be reconstructed, and, while Jerusalem resounds with the acclamations of the redeemed, shouting grace, grace unto it, as the topstone is adjusted its radiating glory will fill the world!

Having lingered longer than I intended with the Israelite, amid the lofty strains of his triumphal song as Canaan rose to his sight, I can only very briefly speak of the Christian who has crossed the desert, and the emotions with which he surveys the past and looks forward to his eternal rest. But, as the experience of the two Pilgrims is so nearly alike, our remarks on the closing scenes of the Christian's journey may with great propriety be condensed. May not he who has passed through the perils, the afflictions, the deliverances, the joys and the sorrows, the hopes and the fears, that are incident to a pilgrimage towards the heavenly Canaan, breathe out the feelings of his soul

in the song of Moses? How appropriately may he summon heaven and earth to listen to his dying testimony of the mercy and goodness of God! Surely, his deliverance from the tyranny of Satan, his regeneration, his justification by faith, and restoration to the Divine favor, are all themes that awaken the interest, and concern the well-being of all intelligent creatures. "Draw near, ye that fear God, and I will declare what he has done for my soul." The pilgrim to glory was once a stranger to grace, unholy, helpless, and exposed to wrath. As the Lord found Jacob in a waste place, in a fierce, howling wilderness, so, also, did the Shepherd and Bishop of the Christian find him straying in the wilderness, and brought him to His fold, rejoicing. I once heard at a love-feast the story of an aged, toil-worn pilgrim. He rose to testify of God's goodness, and said—"Forty years have I followed the Lord Jesus, and I have always found Him a faithful and good master, and I hope to serve him to the end." I have often listened with pleasure and edification to the feeble and gray-headed, while detailing their Christian experience, and it has invariably corresponded with the details given in the song of Moses. To the carnal mind there is something melancholy in the condition and aspect of the aged. "But the hoary head is a crown of glory, when found in the way of righteousness."

Those who by faith behold Canaan near at hand, and whose senses are regaled by the music and fragrance of Paradise, make the evening of their life a time of patient waiting and rejoicing. And, while they rejoice in a blissful hope of immortality, they cease not

to proclaim to others the glory of that salvation which is by Jesus Christ. "As cold water is to a thirsty soul," so was the message of the gospel to their souls; and, as the dew and the gentle rain upon the grass, so, refreshing and vivifying do they find the grace of God. With what earnestness do they show the sufficiency of the word of God as an infallible guide through the wilderness of this world! with what rapture do they speak of Jesus—of the love and the goodness of God! What a noble testimony do they leave to the efficacy of the Spirit, and the love and joy and peace in the Holy Ghost!

My fellow-pilgrims, let us join in this song of triumph, and show forth the praise of God. Some of us are admonished by the hardships, the toils, as also by the joys and hopes of the past, that we are nearly through the desert. We have gone through deep waters, through swelling floods, over arid plains, and through burning heat; the pressure of those that pursue our life is painfully present, and soon the everlasting Canaan may loom out upon the distant horizon, flashing with the glory of God. Forward, then, in the path of duty; and, as we press towards the mark of the prize of our high calling, let us publish by every breath the faithfulness and loving kindness of the Lord! Encourage saints, strengthen the feeble, animate the faint, revive the lukewarm, and convert sinners from the error of their ways. Are you weary? Heed it not; there is an eternity of rest before you. Are you persecuted, scoffed, ridiculed, because you will not walk in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful? Let them scout and jest, for to the holy redemption is

drawing nigh! Afflictions will come, the hour of death will come; eternal realities will ere long gather about the godly and the ungodly; and then, when the terrors and darkness of death break around us, the pilgrims to heaven can look with a calm eye and a serene spirit upon the gathering storm, and exclaim, with a triumphant spirit, while the wicked are swept away in their wickedness, "For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges." And now, having travelled with each other from the dawn of our new life, through the varied experiences of those who go from strength to strength, until they are perfected before God, permit me to commend to you the entreaty of Moses to the Israelite—to lay these things to heart, to take heed to the oracles of God, which are able to make you wise unto salvation. Let your mouth show forth the righteousness and salvation of the Lord, and with an humble heart but firm spirit say, "I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only." A remembrance of His goodness, of what you were and what you are, will keep you from falling. With hearts confiding in the merits of Jesus, and with longing eyes fixed upon the immortal Canaan, let us hasten towards the land of the blest and the home of the weary! Having Jesus for our leader, the Eternal God for our refuge, and the Holy Ghost as our Comforter and Sanctifier, we know that our feet shall stand within thy pearly gates and walk thy golden streets, oh! thou blessed city of my God!—the New Jerusalem, the everlasting home of the redeemed!

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE PILGRIMS PASSING OVER JORDAN.

Read Joshua iii. 14-17; Isaiah xliii. 2; 1 Cor. xv. 53-58.

“BETTER is the end of a thing, than the beginning thereof.” This golden coin from the sacred mine has obtained a world-wide currency since it has passed through the mint of the illustrious dramatist, and received the familiar superscription, “All’s well that ends well.” In the successful termination of an enterprise we forget the difficulties encountered in our progress towards its consummation, and, if the hardships through which we have toiled are ever recalled, they will be regarded as gracious helps to the attainment of the end. The army of Hannibal obtained an easy and brilliant victory over the Romans after crossing the Alps; they suffered an inglorious defeat after their repose and indulgence on the sunny plains of Italy. The thunder would be divested of its majestic voice and shorn of its terrific power, were the walls of its prison removed. It is only when its accumulated energies burst through the barriers of its confinement that its angry notes reverberate through the arched heavens. There is nothing great or glorious in Nature but it is largely indebted for its excellence to the resistance it encountered in its growth and development. But for the massive mountain of solid rock that rose

in the course of the river, the world would have no Niagara. This principle applies with equal force to all moral enterprises. It is the outward pressure that aims at its destruction, that consolidates, gives each part in the structure its appropriate place, and causes each block to rest upon the foundation. As the tempest tries the strength of the vessel, so does opposition try the quality and purpose of man in a noble undertaking. As the storms which prostrate the unsound and feeble trees of the forest, but send the roots of the lofty pine and sturdy oak far down through the rocks and to the secret fountains, so the forces that war against moral organizations will overturn the unsound, while they give permanency to those possessed of real life and excellence. Israel never was stronger than when encompassed by sworn enemies, and their exertions were never more glorious than when they contended for their hearths, their altars, and their lives.

From Egypt to Jordan they met at every step obstacles in some form or other, hunger and thirst, fatigue and hardships, and "the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way." They had passed through a long and dreary desert, endured great trials, left the bones of fathers and mothers in the sand; but now they have reached the confines of the long-wished for promised land. There it rises to their view; they behold the heritage of the seed of Abraham with mingled emotions. Now gratitude predominates as they remember the Divine goodness and forbearance; then, with feelings of humiliation and self-reproach, they bemoan their distrust of Providence and their rebellions. Sometimes they may have doubted whether

there was such a land, and when they did not call its existence in question they despaired of gaining possession of it, and therefore regretted that they had undertaken that perilous and painful journey. But now there is no more room for doubt, hope is dissolved into vision, and one final effort will bring them into a blessed realization of all that God had promised to them and their fathers. True, Moses had entered into rest; but Joshua succeeded him to the leadership of Israel. "And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee." He had been duly installed into office, and consecrated for the discharge of his sacred functions, by the laying on of hands by Moses. Fully invested with power to rule Israel, the Lord is about to signalize the opening of his brilliant career by a miracle little less remarkable than the one at the Red Sea, so that the passage of Jordan might stamp his commission with the signet of heaven. The hosts of Israel were marshalled into a procession duly ordered by the Lord. "And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither and hear the words of the Lord. Hereby shall ye know that the living God is among you. Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan." The sounding trumpets give the signal to march, and the vast column follows the priests bearing the ark. As soon as the feet of the Levites touched the edge of the water, the river opened a passage. The descending current was arrested by an invisible power, and along that line the floods felt the energy of that voice which said—"hith-

erto shalt thou come, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." The elements cannot disregard the authority of their Maker, and the waters rolled in mountain masses against the invisible barrier, blending their murmurs with the hymn of praise that ascended from the redeemed of the Lord in the midst of Jordan. A man from each tribe had been selected to take a stone from the bed of Jordan, and to carry it over to the other side to rear a monument of their miraculous passage. As soon as the multitude had passed over, the priests who stood in the middle of the river with the ark moved forward, and when they trod the soil of Canaan the waters resumed their course. Such a thrilling scene was an appropriate finale to the most marvellous drama that graces the history of man. The grandeur of this miracle was heightened by the fact that the river was, at the time of their passage, broader and deeper than usual. The melting of the snow in the mountains of Lebanon, near which this river has its rise, was the cause of the overflowing of Jordan in the spring, or the time of barley harvest. "The floods lifted their voice, the floods lifted up their waves, while the Lord on high showed himself mightier than the noise of these many waters." With reference to this miracle, the prophet inquires — "Was the Lord displeased against the rivers? was thine anger against the rivers? No; thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people." When the period for Israel's entrance into the land of promise had arrived, all difficulties were conquered, obstructions like mountains were made a plain, and rivers became dry for the ransomed of the Lord to pass over. Their entire history, from the

period of their deliverance from bondage to this hour, was marked with stupendous miracles. God was manifestly with them; their enemies heard of the wonders that the Lord wrought for them, and Rahab spoke to the spies she had concealed of the report of the drying up of the Red Sea. They had heard of the sublime symbol of the Divine presence, the pillar of fire, and as the Hebrews sung, whenever that cloud rose from the tabernacle, the signal to march—"Arise, O Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered," so the rumor of these unusual occurrences cast fearfulness and trembling upon the heathen world. The inhabitants of Jericho were terror-stricken when they saw Israel encamp opposite their city; they offered no resistance to the passage of the river, but shut themselves up in the city, awaiting their doom. At Jordan they saw very distinctly that, however unworthily they had acted, and whatever doubts and fears they had entertained along the way, that the dealings of God with them were full of mercy, and that all their trials were necessary and good. They recognised the wisdom of that long and arduous course of training by which they were prepared for their high destiny. Once led about in the desert, they knew not why; but now the discipline to which they had been subjected was made manifest in blessed results; their laws, their institutions, and a well-organized army of warriors demonstrated the wisdom that ordained their education. What an interesting picture was unfolded before the mind of the thoughtful Israelite. His eye ranged over the events grouped within that compass of time, from the day that Jacob left Canaan to visit his son Joseph up to

that momentous epoch when they entered the promised land. It constitutes a memorable chapter in the world's history, much of it mysterious, but abounding in events the most stirring and brilliant that ever transpired on earth. The various transactions clustering within those two points of time, comprehended in their germs all the illustrious developments of that transcendent scheme of mercy, whose streams of blessing now vocalize the earth with God's praise. It is a period in the holy record which we cannot contemplate too often nor too profoundly. It was the womb in which were generated the most sublime mysteries; institutions of law so just, wise and good, that all civilized nations have enriched their jurisprudence by contributions from the wisdom of Moses; philosophy whose principles, flowing through the channel of tradition, sent their vitalizing power into the most renowned systems of erudition of the pagan world; while it was also the matrix where the sublime elements of the theocracy were in a formative state, coalescing and maturing, until fully evolved at the death of their leader; but, above all, it was the hallowed period during which the purposes of Infinite love were assuming tangible forms of manifestation, and clothing themselves with the majesty of the great Redeemer.

But we must detach our meditations from all other themes, and attend to the lessons taught by the crossing of Jordan. As the wandering Israelite is a type of the Christian pilgrim, so his passage of the Jordan into Canaan is an image of the Christian's transit through death to glory. Jordan was the bounding line separating the desert from the land flowing with

milk and honey; death divides earth and heaven. This wonderful event is eminently symbolic in its teaching. Death is represented under a great variety of imagery, among which we find a river which must be passed over; as one representation of that mysterious transition of the soul into eternity. As death may be contemplated under many aspects, the descriptions of it must necessarily vary with these several views. The ordinary opinion of theologians makes it a dissolution, or a separation of soul and body, implying the existence of the former after life has become extinct in the latter. Tertullian defines it: "*Mors disjunctia corporis animæque.*" Cicero defines it: "*Discessus animi a corpore.*" The Scriptural representations of death are mostly the following: "To return to the dust." "The dust shall return to the earth as it was, the spirit unto God who gave it." Also, as a removal from the body; absence from it. The body is, again, compared to a tent, or lodgement in which the soul dwells during this life. Death destroys this tent or house and commands us to travel on—(Job. iv. 21.) Paul says, our earthly house of this tabernacle will be destroyed; and Peter speaks of putting off this tabernacle. Classical writers often use the same imagery to which we are accustomed in the Bible. Plato calls the body the garment of the soul. Paul uses the same idea when he says we would be clothed with immortality, that mortality might be swallowed up in life. Death is also called a sleep; and Homer, in the *Iliad*, represents sleep and death as twin-brothers. But there are other and more impressive representations of death. It is called the dark valley, and the land of

darkness and thick shadows. Dying is represented as a departure and a journey. The mythology of the Greeks and Romans gives elaborate descriptions of the river Styx. This fabulous river was located in the lower world, and was said to encompass the lower regions nine times in its winding course. All who went to the spirit world were supposed to cross this stream before they could reach the Elysian fields.

The most sublime imagery in the Bible of death is, that which represents it as a flood of waters. "Surely in the deep waters they shall not come nigh thee." That is, if repentance is deferred until that awful hour the wicked will not be able to obtain a reconciliation with heaven. In Isaiah xliii. 2, the promise of God reads: "When thou goest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee." There are a number of aspects in which there is a striking similarity between the entrance of the Israelite into Canaan and the Christian's passage to the "rest that remaineth to the people of God." The Israelite could only accomplish that feat by Divine help. Had he ventured into the flood under the suggestion of a presumptuous spirit, and not by the command of God, he would have been overwhelmed by the angry stream. Ordinarily, Jordan was nine feet deep; but, then swollen by mountain torrents so that its banks overflowed, it would have been utterly impossible to go through the river on foot. Death is no less formidable to man, and unless prepared by the grace of God, the soul would shrink appalled from the angry stream. That Jordan which all of us must cross gives rise to many reflections fitted

to inspire fearfulness and trembling. Death, forbidding even at a distance, comes to us robed in appalling terrors. We then shall think as we never did before. Many topics that related to the future may have been formally and coldly considered; but in that dread hour, when brought into conflict with death, there will be a waking up of our slumbering faculties that will impart ineffable intensity to our thoughts. God rises up before the mind clothed in all His awe-inspiring attributes. Then, more vividly than ever, is He seen a God of purity, of justice and of power. Those sublime descriptions of His omniscience, omnipresence, and all His other perfections, portrayed on the sacred page, then glow with an overpowering splendor. Spotless Himself, He cannot look with complacency upon sin. But when the Christian turns his eye in upon himself, he will discover many imperfections and impurities, and the dread sense of His presence will cause his soul to shrink from the chill floods of death. The law by which he is to be judged, is holy, just, and good. The holiness and spirituality of that law contrast strangely with our imperfect moral excellence. Its justice affrights, its imperious requirements of complete conformity to its demands in thought, and emotion, and deed, fill the soul with alarm, while memory recalls the multitude of sins. What can I do? Escape from God? "Whither shall I flee from thy presence, or escape from thy spirit? If I ascend into heaven thou art there, if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there, if I take the wings of the morning and flee to the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me and thy right hand shall

hold me." God is everywhere, beholding the evil and the good, and His eye flashes into the most secret depths, His hand holds those who attempt to fly. There is no spot in the universe where a soul can hide from its God. His presence extends through all immensity, and on the most distant orb to which my spirit might wing its flight, the Almighty would compass my path, and know my lying down and my rising up, and read all my thoughts. The attempt to avoid death would be equally fruitless. Men have sought in vain for the medicinal plant that should prevent disease and regenerate the decrepid frame. The fabled fountain whose baptism would secure immortal youth to those who would bathe in its waters, no philosopher and no traveller has yet discovered. The tree of life has been transplanted from earth to the Paradiae above. Where then is the hope of sinners? whither must the guilty fly? where but to Jesus? Whither shall we go but to Him who has eternal life? "Christ has tasted death for every man." "He was wounded for *our* transgressions—the chastisement of our peace was laid upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." "Justified by faith in Christ, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus." Then God is no more a God of terrors; no fire-girt Jehovah, thundering amid the gloom of my death-hour, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." But a reconciled Father, "for we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, 'Abba, Father.'" "For the spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of

God, and, if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ." Death to the Christian pilgrim is, therefore, no longer terrible—he is the messenger that comes to summon him to a throne of glory; he goes to possess a kingdom incorruptible and that fadeth not away. Death is but a narrow stream that divides this world of tears from an immortality full of glory. Now, on the radiant summit of salvation, the believer looks beyond the flood to the everlasting Canaan, clothed with immortal bloom and beauty, glowing with such a ravishing glory that his spirit, exulting, awaits the call of the captain of his salvation to pass over.

When the Israelite crossed the Jordan the ark went in advance into the stream, and remained in the midst thereof until he touched the borders of Canaan. The ark was a symbol of Christ. It was composed of the most precious materials known to man, a superior kind of wood which admitted of a high polish; it was ornamented with gems, overlaid with gold, and finished in the highest style of art. The mercy seat was surmounted by two cherubim, symbolizing the interest manifested by angels in the work of redemption. "And the cherubim shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one towards the other; toward the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubim be. And there I will meet with thee and I will commune with thee." Our Lord Jesus is the channel of the Christian's communication with God—our Great Mediator, our ark of safety. The majesty and power of

the Lord were manifested in the ark. "God, who, at sundry times and in divers manners (by visions, signs, and types), spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high." As the ark went before the Israelite, so the Redeemer goes before the Christian; and as the waters divided when the ark entered the river, so will the Jordan of death give way as Jesus conducts His sons and daughters to glory. The valley of death is no longer dark, for the presence of Christ illumines the gloomy vale. The floods of death may sweep away the impenitent sinner, but Christ's arm sustains the pilgrim to heaven when he goes through the river of death. Whatever of terror may linger about the final hour, faith in Jesus overcomes our fears. The Christian finds death far different from what he expected while it was yet distant.

"O! what is death? 'Tis life's last shore,
Where vanities are vain no more!
Where all pursuits their gaol obtain,
And life is all retouched again;
Where, in their bright results, shall rise
Thoughts, virtues, friendships, griefs, and joys."

The presence of Jesus invests the final hour of the Christian with a holy calm. His life, now past, rises to his view with impressive power. The incidents of

his pilgrimage acquire a significance which they never possessed before. Things that were most trivial in his estimation at the time of their occurrence, are now seen as links connecting the golden chain of Providence that joined him to blissful hopes and glorious realities. Events that deranged his plans, calamities that poured darkness and desolation around his path, now rise as ministers of mercy sent from Jehovah's throne to guide his footsteps into the path of life. And, now that he has come to the long-dreaded hour, he discovers that his grace is proportioned to his day, and the same merciful Sovereign, who sustained him along life's journey, imparts conquering strength. The invisible power that stayed the progress of the billows and caused the Israelite to pass over on solid ground, commands the floods of death to make a way for the sons and daughters of glory to pass through. The Israelite never was weak while the ark was with him; the Christian is never feeble while conscious of the presence of Jesus. While in the desert, the pilgrim had the pillar of cloud and of fire to guide him; but through Jordan the ark must conduct. The cloud had disappeared, it had fulfilled its mission; and thus also the Christian's Shechinah, the Church, in her varied instrumentalities, her ordinances, the Holy Word, the example of the saints—these having conducted to the borders of heaven, have accomplished their office. Jesus Himself must guide through death. He is the friend that sticketh closer than a brother. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." He who has followed the Lord in the regeneration, who has walked

in the light of God's infallible word, will find the terminus of life glorious. As the conflict with death progresses, his faith grows in majesty and strength; as he feels the chill waters touching his soul, his hope flames up with an unearthly brilliancy, increasing in splendor until it melts into the glory of heaven as the beam is lost in perfect day.

"Sure the last end
Of the good man is peace. How calm his exit!
Night dews fall not more calmly on the ground,
Nor weary, worn-out winds expire so soft."

Christ, our glorious ark of the covenant, has destroyed the power of death. In His conquest over death and the grave all His followers have a pledge of their triumph. Blessed Saviour! I have taken up the cross to follow thee. I have found thee faithful, merciful, and true! Thou hast led me in paths that I knew not, Thou hast been my light in darkness, my consolation in seasons of sorrow, my refuge in trouble. Hitherto thy grace has been sufficient; I have found in thy love a balm to heal the wounds inflicted by the faithless friendships of earth, and in thee I have a treasure which compensates for the loss of the best of earthly friends. Glorious Redeemer! I have vowed Thee an eternal service, with Thy help I shall endure unto the end. Whatever Thy wisdom ordains, give me strength to bear meekly until the end cometh, when I shall depart and be with Thee, which is far better.

Send out upon the army of the cross thy spirit; fill every heart with courage, every bosom with joyful

hope; and, as one after the other of the Pilgrims to the Celestial Canaan touches the Jordan of death, may the ensign of Thy triumph inspire them with fortitude, and in Thy strength may they conquer death and ascend to glory. Fellow-pilgrims, press forward, whatever perils crowd your path; though your journey lies through clouds, tempests, darkness, and afflictions—though angry torrents must be breasted, and though mountains must be scaled, still onward and upward, until Jesus places upon that brow on which are so many records of suffering, the crown that fadeth not away. The race to glory is not long, the journey is brief; the desert will soon be exchanged for a land of brooks, of flowing streams, of delicious fruits—a land combining in its products all that can minister to the felicity of immortal spirits. The everlasting Canaan is not far distant, it will soon rise to view; and, seeing that God was faithful in His promises to Israel and brought them into their earthly rest, He will surely guide all to glory who have come out from an unbelieving world and sought refuge in Jesus. Let storms come, and rains descend and beat upon these clay tabernacles—let them be dissolved, we have a portion in our Father's house—mansions are fitted up for us. And when the time of departure comes, the faithful soul will find the river of death dwindling down to a mere rivulet; the Lord Jesus, radiant with glory, will be found there, and, leaning on His omnipotent arm, the spirits of the just will be led up out of the wilderness and over Jordan into the New Jerusalem, and be welcomed by the shouts of the redeemed to the Canaan

of eternal rest. There, by the river that flows from God's throne, clear as crystal, and under the grateful shade of the trees of life, may it be our privilege, who have communed with each other along life's journey, to sit down with each other, and, with all God's holy ones ; spend a happy immortality, and there blend our notes of praise with the music of eternity.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE HOME OF THE PILGRIMS IN THE GOODLY LAND.

“Not in this weary world of ours
Can perfect rest be found ;
Thorns mingle with its fairest flowers
Even on cultured ground ;
Earth’s pilgrim still his loins must gird,
To seek a lot more blest,
And this must be his onward word —
In heaven alone is rest.”

THE fame of the Holy Land is in all the earth: is it not also in heaven? Ay! the land of patriarchs, prophets and apostles has its records on high. That soil was consecrated by the touch of the Saviour’s feet, hallowed by His tears, and embalmed by His precious blood. Its hills and its vales, its brooks and its rivers, are engraved upon immortal tablets; its glory blends with the songs of the redeemed. Could David forget Jerusalem, or Elijah Mount Carmel? Can the scenes of Calvary ever become oblivious? Ah! no, thou favored land, thy memories shall live forever. Thy checkered history links itself with millions of deathless spirits. Not only do devout persons from all nations come to worship at thy holy shrines, but thy mountains, thy hills, thy fountains, yea, all those objects and places hallowed by stirring events are incorporated into the sacred oracles of truth, and, therefore, instinct with immortality. The scholar and the peasant, the hoary-

headed sire and the little child, repeat thy wonders. The saints in glory will recall the thrilling scenes of Palestine that shine as brilliant stars in the history of redemption. From the memorable period when the title which conveyed it to the seed of Abraham was drawn by the recording angel, to that notable day when Christ shall come in the glory of His Father to judge the world, all that transpired within that circle of time will constitute themes of exalted praise. Every soul that has gone up to heaven has carried with it, enshrined in its holiest affections, memories redolent with the glory of the Holy Land. It is mapped out on David's mind, and its visions of beauty, glowing in the Psalms of Israel's sweet singer, may still delight him amid the perpetual bloom of the better Canaan. Those who have ascended from its consecrated scenes to God's right hand will fondly look back to the land where Deity was clothed in a garment of flesh, where Jesus wrought miracles, published the mysteries of salvation, and died to save lost sinners. Yea, even upon our minds, whose eyes never looked upon its glories, there is imaged a picture of Palestine of such exquisite beauty, that the grandeur of heaven alone can excel it in excellence.

Blest land of Judea! thrice hallowed of song,
Where the holiest of memories, pilgrim-like, throng;
In the shade of thy palms, by the shores of thy sea,
On the hills of thy beauty, my heart is with thee.
With the eye of a spirit I look on that shore,
Where pilgrim and prophet have lingered before;
With the glide of a spirit I traverse the sod
Made bright by the steps of the angels of God.

Blue sea of the hills! in my spirit I hear
Thy waters, Gennesareth, chime on my ear;
Where the Lowly and Just with the people sat down,
And thy spray on the dust of His sandals was thrown.
I tread where the twelve, in their wayfaring trod;
I stand where they stood with the chosen of God,
Where His blessings were heard and His lessons were taught,
Where the blind were restored and the healing was wrought.

This land, whose history has filled the world with admiration, was set apart as the home of the bondsmen of Egypt. It was the rest towards which they had journeyed, which they had just entered. Who can picture the happiness of Israel as they gazed upon that glorious landscape, and looked upon the ground they trod to assure themselves it was not a dream? It was precious to them, because it was the inheritance of their fathers. Here Abraham had lived! The father of the faithful, with whose history every Hebrew child was as familiar as Christian infants are with the name of Jesus, had his habitation here. Over these hills, and along these valleys, over which their eyes now ranged, did the flocks of Abraham once crop the tender grass. Here did he entertain angels—yonder is the mount where God proved him—there is the place memorable for his intercessions for the doomed cities of the plain. Among these scenes, and on these fields, did Isaac walk at eventide to meditate. Hence did Jacob fly from the wrath of Esau—to this land did he return, enriched with flocks and children. Here were the twelve sons of Jacob born. Amid these scenes did the patriarchs grow up to manhood; and here they dwelt with their families until God had exalted Joseph to the prime minister-

ship of Egypt, when He sent a famine to drive them to the land of their long affliction. With the many hallowed associations that connected this land with their ancestors, it could not be otherwise than precious to the descendants of such noble sires. With what joy and rejoicing would they pitch their tents on its sacred soil! No longer in the land of strangers, and therefore no more dejected exiles, but, as lawful heirs they entered upon their heritage. What a day, and what a night were those, as they reposed for the first time in their own land! How holy are the shrines where our fathers worshipped! How pleasant is it for the child to visit and revisit those scenes where fond parents once dwelt! Our noblest instincts and holiest feelings are called into play while lingering under the trees planted by our ancestors! Oh! the strange rapture that thrills my soul when my eyes look upon the landscape once admiringly contemplated by my sainted mother! Even the cup of water taken from the spring that often furnished her refreshing draughts is more delicious, because her immaculate lips sipped from the same fountain. Truly, the happiness of these Hebrews must have been great, their delight intensely thrilling, as they kissed the earth on which their fathers had walked.

As the Israelite, so also is the Christian pilgrim, happy beyond conception when he enters the celestial Canaan. Oh! what a record of ineffable glory could the redeemed soul furnish to us, after the first day of its realizations of heavenly delights. What a tide of rapture floods his spirit, what a wealth of glory bursts around him, as he passes within the pearly gates!

What a universe of light and rapture streams back upon his soul, as he takes his first look of the eternal throne! What a delirium of ecstasy rushes through his being, as his eyes are lifted to Jesus! What sensations does he experience, as he gazes upon prophets, apostles, the sparkling multitude, and angels! Who can picture the feelings and emotions of the happy soul, as it looks around on the gorgeous palace of Jehovah? Oh, my God! what a moment will that be, when I shall know and feel, that I am in heaven. A thousand ages of anguish would be a poor price for such a boon, as one moment in heaven. A life of unmitigated suffering, of dark calamity, of unbroken adversities and heavy woes, might be cheerfully endured, for one hour in heaven. Unite all the distresses ever felt on earth, combine all the pains and griefs into a mighty weight of sorrow, and the recollection thereof would be quenched in a sea of glory, the instant that the spirit would fold its pinions at the foot of Jehovah's throne. Oh, my God! I will no more grow weary under the burdens which thy Providence assigns me, since this cross shall be exchanged for a crown, these pangs that wring my heart for everlasting joys, and this weariness shall be succeeded by glorious rest. Forgive the unuttered disquiets of a soul that, through its dark destiny, sometimes felt that its "steps were almost gone, and that its feet had well nigh slipped," as it saw the prosperity of the wicked, and found thy servants in want and in tears. In those hours of darkness the problem of life was too intricate for a disturbed spirit to solve, and I asked for light on this strange mystery, that the sons and daughters of the Lord of the universe should be

desolate and afflicted, while the enemies of heaven rioted in the riches of Providence. But I learned in the sanctuary of Thy wisdom, and from the oracles of Thy word I understood, that they have their portion in this life; and that not *here*, but beyond the grave, are the rest and the reward of those who are strangers and pilgrims on earth. It is enough that the servant be as the Lord, who gives a touching picture of His destitution, in the memorable words—"Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has not where to lay his head."

We shall find heaven precious, because it is the appropriate nativity of the soul. Although exiled from it, because the sins of our primogenitors drove them from Paradise, yet all the tokens of a destiny whose grandeur could not be realized on earth, are upon us, and all our faculties rise up to demonstrate our birth-right to a brilliant immortality. The wretchedness and restlessness of the soul in its alienation from God, teach us that some dire calamity has driven man from his inheritance. The soul is made for God, He has impressed upon it His own vast nature; nothing else can fill its boundless capacities; no other object can render it happy. These exalted faculties, these glorious powers, are manifestly designed to unfold and act with their appropriate energy amid those lofty spheres of intellectual and moral exertion that lie around Jehovah's throne. The Christian soul will feel, as it rises to the incorruptible inheritance, that heaven is the legitimate empire of its activity. That its structure is adapted to the employments of that holy place, admits of no doubt; and, having been born in heaven, it is

never absolutely happy until it returns to its home. Our Father lives in heaven; there He unveils His perfections, and sends out upon the redeemed a ceaseless flood of glory. We are heirs of God, and exalted into fellowship with principalities and powers, with cherubim and seraphim; we enter, even in a higher sense than did the Israelite, the land of our Father. Was the pilgrim to the earthly Canaan delivered from oppressors? was his salvation glorious through miracles and wonders? The Christian has been ransomed with a greater price, with nobler sacrifice—for a greater than Moses led him out of bondage, educated him, and brings him to glory. Jesus has purchased our heavenly birth-right with his own precious blood. That celestial land is the home of our elder brother, and the abode of that holy family of which we are members. Blessed retreat of the weary pilgrim! happy home of my sainted ones! how resplendent is thy light, how glorious are thy joys!

Look aloft, where light is breaking
Through this doubt-enveloped sky—
Forward leap, the joy partaking
Of a higher destiny;
Lift thy staff and move apace
In the pilgrim-thronging race.

The Israelite found the goodly land exceedingly precious, since its possession was attended with a realization of his hopes. Forty years was he in the wilderness, but now he has come to the long-sought rest. Now he can lay his staff aside, or hang it up as a trophy of his success. He will require his tent no

more — he will now build himself a permanent home. The manna has also ceased ; for, what need has he of the miraculous food when the fertile Canaan furnishes so many excellent fruits ? The pillar of cloud has also vanished, for, now that they have reached their destiny, their wanderings have ceased. Happy art thou, O ! Israel, now sitting under thine own vine and fig-tree, none daring to molest thee or make thee afraid. And now that he has survived the perils of the desert, and escaped from the snares of his enemies, he renders to the Lord the sacrifices of thanksgiving and praise. It is fit that he should render the glory due unto the Lord, for His loving kindness has been very great.

How like the Israelite is the Christian who has safely reached heaven. When his pilgrimage closes in the skies, all his expectations are realized ; aye, much more than he anticipated will he receive. At length he has reached his long-sought rest. Long did he hope, patiently did he follow the Shechinah ; but now he is rewarded for all his trials. Ridiculed by the wicked, scoffed at by the world, he faithfully kept on through evil and good report, following the Lamb ; and now, for his well-doing he obtains glory, honor, and immortality, His toilsome journey has terminated amid the splendors of the new Jerusalem. Blissful change ! Raised from these poor enjoyments of earth to a cloudless immortality — from his lowly position as pilgrim to a throne of glory — he rejoices at God's right hand. Though the Christian's path to heaven is crowned with goodness and mercy, yet, even these Divine gifts were the means of calling up thorns in his way, that, by painful intimations he might know that this world was

not his rest. And, while the annals of his experience glow with many gracious remembrances, yet did many hopes that bloomed along the road wither, and many of his expectations perished. Alas! what tears of penitence and sorrow bathe our upward journey. Homes are desolated, beloved ones go down into the cold grave, and change and death are pouring a blight over the sunny spots on earth. All that is afflictive to man may enter into the experience of the Christian while journeying towards his everlasting home; but there he is free from all that grieved and pained him here. This world is a scene of incessant woes; diseases, like destroying angels, are everywhere extinguishing the lamps of life, afflictions burden the air with lamentations, and there are multitudes of sufferers groaning under bodily and spiritual infirmities. There is many a weary spirit around us, many a broken heart concealed under gay apparel. It is impossible for a sensitive heart, whose sympathies have been elevated and refined by grace, not to be touched with the miseries of others; and to steep itself in the waters of their grief. Above all, is the spectacle of a wicked world saddening to the pious soul. To witness the conduct of those who make themselves vile, who trample upon the statutes of heaven, and war against Christ—all this is painful to a pure mind. Oh! what joy to be transported from the midst of pollution, from scenes of impiety and crime, to a holy heaven. The Christian in glory has at length obtained the desire of his heart—he has reached that abode of absolute purity where no foul thought is born, and where no profane word or work pollutes the air. There, none of the imperfec-

tions that clung to the soul through life are permitted to enter. The struggle was often severe between the flesh and the spirit, and, all along his journey he had to lament his indwelling corruptions, which put gall and wormwood into the cup of his enjoyment; but, now the warfare is over, and he is far removed from those spectacles of evil that distressed him on earth, so that he rests from his conflicts and triumphs in the holiness of heaven. He is with the Saviour; He who, though unseen, caused him joy unspeakable and full of glory, is there revealed to him clothed in His resplendent attributes. What joy to meet and to abide with a dearly beloved one after a long separation! How often does the spirit, weary under the burdens of life, look away from these agitated scenes to the repose of heaven and exclaim—"Oh! that I had wings like a dove, then would I fly away and be at rest." Every renewed soul feels, in its onward struggles towards its resplendent destiny, the force of the apostle's experience when he says, "For in this tabernacle we do groan, not that we might be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."

The Israelite entered upon the possession of an exceedingly good land. Palestine abounded in that natural wealth which constitutes the basis of a large and permanent prosperity. Moses had written, "It is a land of brooks of water, of fountains, and depths that spring out of hills and valleys. A land of wheat and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land of olive oil and honey. A land where thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it, a land whose stones are iron, and out

of whose hills thou mayest dig brass." Schubert, a traveller who took extraordinary pains to examine the Holy Land, observes, *Reise*, vol. iii. 104, "Apart from the grandeur of this country's history, nature has stamped on its surface such distinguishing and peculiar features as hardly any other portion of the world exhibits." That Providence should distinguish it in its natural formation is not marvellous, when we remember the sublime transactions that were to take place on its sacred soil. Neither is it singular that the Lord of the universe should endow that land with extraordinary properties of fertility. That it was extraordinarily favored in this respect is evident, when it is observed that every Sábbatival year the whole country was given to rest, and the land exempted from cultivation, and that, notwithstanding this repose, the large population was abundantly supplied with all the necessaries of life; whereas want and distress must have accompanied such a regulation, had it not been for some special interposition of Providence. Their numerous sacrifices and festival occasions made large demands upon their time and substance, and yet, while they were faithful to the Divine requirements, God's blessings enriched them the more abundantly. It was therefore manifest to all that the Lord, who had provided this land and this people with special reference to the promotion of His purposes of mercy, was with them, and blessed them, as He did no other nation. Why, even now, though the sword of the destroyer has wasted it, and the blight of the oppressor is upon it, its natural glory is still admired. Although it is not now clothed with the prosperity that made it the joy of the whole earth

in the reign of David, yet, as in man, there are traces of a lost excellence, and gleams of a high original glory; thus, also, there linger on the hills and glimmer in the vales of Palestine, a few rays of its ancient grandeur. But, above all, was it glorious in its spiritual provisions. There the sovereign Lord of the universe held converse with man. The prophets that were there raised up to proclaim God's will, the priests that ministered at the altar, the daily sacrifices, the solemn worship, and the glorious temple, all contributed to make the home of the Israelite beautiful and good.

But, much more glorious is that celestial country which becomes the inheritance of the Christian who endures to the end. The universe is laid under tribute for imagery to portray the heavenly world. Prophets, sacred poets, and apostles, in their loftiest flights, seemed conscious of their inability fully to set forth the glory of the heavenly world. The elevated descriptions of Jehovah carry with them the idea of an ineffable splendor as the appropriate decoration of the residence of the Supreme Ruler. Look out upon the broad universe, and behold how immensity flashes at every point with the light and majesty of the Most High! "Who stretcheth the north over the empty places and hangeth the earth upon nothing?" "Who laid the foundations of the earth?" "By his spirit he garnished the heavens." "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance." With what perfect ease does the Omnipotent do all that is here affirmed.

He has scattered innumerable worlds through space, and set them in vast immensity as diamonds flashing with His glory, and shall not He who performs such wonders make His residence unspeakably glorious? Can any intelligent being survey these gorgeous structures, that rise to our view in every direction, without experiencing an elevation of feeling and an exaltation of thought? The soul rises in admiration as it contemplates this beautiful earth and the starry firmament. I never weary of admiring the majesty and power of God, as they are illustrated in the general features of creation, and proclaimed by the stupendous operations of Nature. What combinations of human energy and skill are needed to complete an earthly palace! with what ease did the Lord rear this magnificent structure that surrounds us! What noisy effort does it require to build and sail a vessel! The mine is sought, where man toils in digging the metal—others are in the forest, in the shop, on the field—and, after a great expenditure of time and strength, the vessel is launched and freighted amid the acclamations of thousands; but God creates a world, and sends it sailing through space with its precious freight, without any laborious toil. Is it not just to infer that the adorable Sovereign, who has created all things by the word of His power, has made his immediate residence more attractive and glorious than any other part of His empire? Surely, such is the conclusion that reason deduces from sound premises. It is in conformity with those principles that govern intelligent beings.

This is, moreover, precisely what we are taught to believe by the intimations of Scripture. The imagery

under which heaven is represented is the most glowing that known and visible objects can furnish. When the sublime mysteries of heaven were partially unveiled to the vision of Isaiah, he fell insensible to the earth. Jesus speaks of the home of the holy as His Father's house of many mansions—a palace vast and resplendant; for he prays that His disciples may gain admission to its joys, that they might behold the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. The Apocalyptic vision of the city of God, though falling short of the reality, is itself more brilliant than all the architectural skill of man could produce. “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.” The glory of God was upon this city, and its light flashed as the lustre of a precious stone or diamond. It was composed of the most precious material, covered with gold, with twelve gates of pearl, with twelve angels in their celestial armor guarding them, and without sun or moon, for the glory of the Lord illumined it. This glorious city is watered by the river of life, and filled with the sweet strains of angelic music and the lofty harmonies of the redeemed. “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of

man to conceive, what the Lord has laid up for those who love him." Blessed home of ransomed spirits, when shall I behold thy glories ! Thou art more excellent than the earthly Canaan, that flowed with milk and honey. That was subject to change and to blight ; it is now wasted and desolate. But no storm shall ever burst upon thy celestial plains, my longed-for Canaan ! No sword, nor fire, nor pestilence, shall sweep with blighting power over thine immortal bloom ! There it stands in its peerless glory, the joy of worlds, the metropolis of the universe, the residence of my God and Saviour ! Age shall roll upon age, but no blight shall dim thy glory. This earth, so long the theatre of crime and blood, shall be cleansed by the baptismal fires of the last day, and restored to the primeval purity of the sinless Paradise ; but the whirling centuries, from whose agitated bosom shall evolve that brilliant era of our world when it shall be fitted for the inauguration of the universal reign of Jesus of Nazareth, and all those changes which will strew the earth with the wrecks of human greatness, will cast no shadow upon the resplendent home of the redeemed. Jerusalem, now trodden under foot by the infidel, shall yet shine with the glory of the Messiah ; and the monuments of the beauty of Canaan, now broken and mouldering, shall be rebuilt, in that day when our alienated race shall return from its exile to the fellowship of God. Then shall the "new earth" be tenanted by a holy race, and the inhabitants of heaven shall have free communication with the dwellers upon God's footstool. Then shall it be "as the days of heaven upon earth," and earth and heaven shall be to

each other as the outer and inner court of the vast temple wherein the redeemed shall worship the high God. Oh! it will be a glorious home. More gorgeous than the splendor of an oriental court, for it is clothed with the magnificence of Deity. It is glorious in its delights, ministering to all the wants of immortal spirits, and causing every capacity to overflow with rapture. Its pleasures are limitless and god-like, they are ineffably great and endure forever. It is the house of many mansions, filled with the beatific presence of God and the Lamb. It is the residence of that innumerable congregation of holy ones, whose anthems of praise swell in lofty grandeur around the eternal throne, and the music of whose harps will fill with delightful harmonies the revolving cycles of eternal ages.

To that goodly land of cloudless felicity, that enduring rest, which is reserved for the people of God, millions are now wending their way. The tribes and kindreds and tongues from Asia, Africa, Europe, and America, and from the islands of the sea, are represented in that company who are passing through much tribulation towards the city of God. There will the true Israelite and the faithful Christian meet to recount to each other the sorrows and joys of their pilgrimage. There they will unitedly praise the wisdom and goodness of that sleepless Providence that led them "in paths they knew not," and conducted them into the hidden path of life, and amid all their wanderings threw around them its sheltering wings. Fellow-pilgrim to eternity, who hast accompanied me in the journeys of the Israelite, and travelled with me in that path of life through which the Christian's progress

to glory lies, shall we meet each other at God's right hand? May the angel of the covenant, the gracious Saviour, whose glory has been my guiding star through these pages, attend their perusal with His awakening and sanctifying grace, and turn the eyes of earth's pilgrims from the vanishing glories of this world upon Himself, the bright morning Star that shines in the firmament of Redemption, that by its unfailing light they may be conducted to that home of never-fading glory where God liveth and reigneth forever. Eternal Father, hasten the day of promise when all "the redeemed of the Lord shall come to Mount Zion, with songs of deliverance, and everlasting joy upon their heads!"

THE END.



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